THE NOBLE PATHLESS PATH

The Buddha, J. Krishnamurti, and the End of Suffering

by

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"*The richness, the sweetness, the freedom of that life which is within each one (of us) must be released through experience, not through systems, creeds or religions. Experience requires no interpreters. Let no man interpret the experience of life to you except yourself. To live on experience, which is your own creates certainty of purpose, and from that certainty of purpose… comes the ecstasy of the struggle to understand life. Struggle is painful to most people, sorrowful, it dulls the edge of thought and of feeling. But if you understood the purpose of life, which is to make the Self rich and harmonious, then struggle becomes really exciting*."

J. Krishnamurti, Early Writings, Volume IV, 1971

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Preface

In October 2001, I was awarded the Buddha-Krishnamurti Research Fellowship offered by the Krishnamurti Foundation India in collaboration with Benares Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India. This opportunity was funded by an anonymous private donor.

My task was to prepare a comparative research project on a theme of my choice and to approach that theme from the perspectives of Indian philosopher, speaker, writer, and spiritual figure, Jiddu Krishnamurti (K) and Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha. At that point in time in my own life, I had been studying K's works independently for seven years and had just completed my Master of Arts degree in Integral Counseling Psychology from the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) focusing on such topics as Theravāda (*Abhidhamma*/Buddhist psychology) and Mahayana Buddhism as well as Gestalt/existential, developmental, and transpersonal psychotherapies. Although I did not consider myself a Buddhist, I sat in weekly meditation groups with the Insight Meditation Group of San Francisco from 1997 through 2000. Prior to my graduation from CIIS, I participated in two ten-day silent Vipassanā meditation retreats at the Northern California Vipassanā Center, and at Spirit Rock, An Insight Meditation Center, having already begun my personal exploration of Vipassanā around 1994.

At the onset of this project, I was interested in the topic of suffering as I had many of my own personal questions around how to make sense of both personal and collective human suffering. While living at the Rajghat Study Centre in Varanasi, India, I spent much of my time diving into K's earlier works that I had not previously read, watching VHS recordings of K's talks, and quietly walking the grounds of the Krishnamurti Study Centre, the Vasanta College for women and the Rajghat Besant School for children. What occurred to me very early on was that K was saying much of the same things repeatedly in his writings and talks and I wondered if the same could be true with the earliest recorded accounts of the Buddha's teachings (*Dhamma*). With the knowledge that the Buddha never penned any writings by his own hand and that the earliest Buddhist texts emerged approximately 400 years after his death, I decided to source the earliest available literature for my comparative research project focusing on Theravāda: The Doctrine of the Elders, the oldest existing school of Buddhism. Given the various schools of Buddhism and the vast amount of corresponding literature available, I hoped that in focusing on the earliest writings, I may get a more authentic sense of what these teachings were attempting to convey and if there were any correlations between K and Buddha's teachings. As part of my research fellowship, I was also given full access to the library at the Central Institute Sarnath of Higher Tibetan Studies just seven kilometers northeast of the Rajghat Study Center nearby the Deer Park where Buddha is said to have delivered his First Sermon on The Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path.

Some of the greatest challenges in completing this project stemmed from K's own ideas on the futility of comparison which are addressed in ***Part One: Introduction***, as well as my own personal challenges as a researcher investigating the role of suffering in my own life and the possibility of its end.

Specific Aim of The Project

1) To examine and contemplate the parallels found between the early teachings of the Buddha from the Pali Canon, Theravāda, specifically, the Buddha's First Sermon, *Dhamma cakka ppavattana Sutta* as well as other early discourses from the Pāli Canons as well as the lifetime works of K in an attempt to draw correlations between the two teachings as they relate to the possibility of an end to suffering as well as the cyclical nature of the rebirth/reincarnation process that seems to impact all humans.

2) To consider the possibility that a universal truth exists between both K and the Buddha's teachings that provides an understanding of the nature of human suffering and whether it is possible to end that suffering in one's lifetime.

3) To examine available background information pertaining to both Buddha and K as living human beings on their own unique journey of awakening as well as their lifetimes of teaching post-liberation from suffering serving as stewards of higher consciousness for humanity.

Part One: Introduction

Know Thyself

Throughout human history, we, humans, have been united by a common quest: the search for answers to the problem of suffering. We have an abundance of teachings, religions, doctrines, therapies, and spiritual communities promising deeper understanding and relief from this painful aspect of existence. Yet, as a species, we continue to grapple with this dilemma. We approach it through religion, science, psychology, technology, medicine, and the arts, yet we continue to witness ever-growing widespread hatred, violence, and significant misunderstandings surrounding concepts like enlightenment, autonomy, personal responsibility, and freedom. In an age where self-realized masters are plentiful and both historical and contemporary spiritual teachings are often accessible at little or no cost, we must ask ourselves: Why have we struggled to integrate this knowledge into our lives? Why have we failed to transform our own ignorance into wisdom, into a heart-shattering intelligence? And do we truly seek an end to suffering?

The ancient Greek phrase inscribed at the entrance to the Apollo temple of Delphi: "*Gnothi Seauton*" which means "know thyself" singularly sums up the aim inherent in the lifetime works of Jiddu Krishnamurti (K) and Buddha, piercing the heart of both teachings. It may seem unusual, but according to both K and Buddha, true understanding of the path to freedom as well as the inner secrets and fundamental truths of the universe can only come through self-awareness, insight, and direct experience. K was not concerned with universal laws as much as he was deeply passionate about helping humanity to free themselves from the limitations of mind and its conditioning which is also a common theme prevalent in all the various schools of Buddhism.

To grasp the profound significance of "know thyself," one must first be able to admit that they do not yet possess this insight. This requires tremendous humility and innocence which many people have lost over the course of childhood and later, through the hustle and bustle of modern living. We have become hardened over time maintaining our images of self and others struggling to find meaning and purpose in our lives in a world that seems on the verge of collapse that is simultaneously growing more disconnected from the natural world. Many people assume they know themselves and dismiss further exploration as unnecessary. Even if they consider the idea of self-awareness, they might believe that modern psychology has already unveiled the complete workings of the human mind - essentially, what makes us who we are.

Nothing could be more misguided, and this misunderstanding lies at the heart of many issues in modern life. Today, many people believe they know themselves when, in fact, they do not; they only know the conditioned, fragmented version of themselves; they know themselves only through comparison with others or in terms of measurement to standards dictated by those who have been placed in a position of authority: parents, doctors, priests, gurus, politicians, bosses, therapists, etc. Similarly, modern psychology claims to reveal our true self but often falls short missing the divine nature of our true spiritual Self. As a result, many people experience feelings of boredom, frustration, futility, and hopelessness. To escape these

feelings, they seek solace in the distractions, ambitions, and the pursuits of contemporary life, often with little success. In the words of Buddhist scholar, Edward Conze: "*We tenaciously cling to the belief that some happiness can be found in this world.*"[1] At the core of our being, however, many of us feel a profound sense of separation and a lack of belonging in the world. We feel disconnected from ourselves and others and a longing to contribute something useful and worthwhile that might make a difference in our lives and in our world.

We often prioritize "getting ahead," filling our lives with distractions like sports, romance, work, television, social media, and politics. Yet, beneath these superficial activities, we often feel a deep sense of dissatisfaction and struggle to pinpoint its source. Our lives have lost meaning and purpose and many struggle to find a moment of joy in the busyness of their everyday lives. However, if we are at all honest, many of us recognize that something is missing from modern life, though its true nature remains elusive. Perhaps the solution is encapsulated in the phrase "know thyself." When one recognizes that they do not truly understand who they are and how they operate, and that modern psychology has fallen short by focusing solely on mental and emotional aspects rather than addressing the whole person, one can begin to live more authentically and with greater awareness. This is where the teachings of both Buddha and K come into play. Each, in their unique way, helped people acknowledge their lack of self-awareness, the restlessness of their minds, and offered guidance on how to find their way back home to themselves - back to their true nature as infinitely creative, intelligent beings capable of attaining true liberation from suffering.

According to K, true liberation is not a destination to be reached or a goal to be achieved, but rather a state of awareness and understanding that arises from the profound realization of one's true nature and the nature of reality. He emphasized the importance of freedom from conditioning, beliefs, and the ego, advocating for a direct, unmediated experience of life in the present moment. K concluded, from his own direct insight, that liberation from sorrow comes from deep self-inquiry and the observation of one's thoughts, feelings, speech, and actions without judgment, in total attention to "what is." It involves seeing the interconnectedness of all life and living with compassion and clarity. For K, true freedom requires a complete transformation of mind, the end of selfish desires, fears, competition, and the cessation of inner conflict, leading to a state of inner peace and harmony. From the Buddhist perspective, enlightenment entails the end of suffering as well as the end of rebirth in this realm and beyond. Further, Buddhism describes enlightenment as occurring when "*the false and separative self is slain and the true Self steadily developed; it is the sole end of all progress on the Eightfold Path; it is the Buddh in Buddhism.*"[2]

This work investigates how Buddha's teachings might deepen our understanding of K's philosophy. Additionally, we examine K's ideas in relation to the Four Noble Truths leading to the end of suffering, the role of "self" in the awakening process and finally, how K might re-define the Eightfold Path from his perspective. If the insights at the core of these teachings are universal, we may gain a clearer perspective on what each figure sought to express throughout their lifetime of speaking and working with others. Renowned American Buddhist teacher, co-founder of the Insight Meditation Society (IMS) in Barre, Massachusetts, Joseph Goldstein, contemplated whether there might be a common denominator within the different schools of Buddhism:

"Who's right? Which teachings are true? – my mind came to a sudden resolution, providing the framework for understanding that all the teachings, all the words, all the sutras, are skillful means for liberating the mind, rather than statements of absolute truth. When we take words to be statements of ultimate truth, then differences of opinion will inevitably result in conflict. This is where ideological wars come from, and we see the words and the teachings as different skillful means for liberating the mind, then they all become part of the great dharma feast."[3]

Can human beings find an end to their own suffering? When we speak of authentic change, be it emotional, psychological, and/or spiritual, do we have any say in the matter? Countless individuals, couples, and families go to therapy, read self-help books, join support groups, experiment with psychedelic plant medicines, embrace religion or new age spirituality, get married, have children, have affairs, get divorced - all to quell the emptiness in their lives, to fill an unseen, painful void. Yet, none of these solutions seem to work. At best, our mental health "systems" have produced nothing more than psychological adjustments to malignant societal standards and a culture hopelessly medicated and labeled as "mentally ill." More tragic than that are the countless young children put on medication by parents who are unwilling or incapable of looking at their part in the dysfunction of their own family system. We are dealing with generations of conditioning which has diluted our natural light and inner knowing that life is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be lived. Little progress, if any, has been made towards the actualization of a spiritual transformation that ultimately results in an observable evolution in the consciousness of humanity.

When it comes to pain, we humans know best how to endure and inflict. How often in nature do we witness animals inflicting pain on one another without reason? Do they hold grudges? This may be what distinguishes us from animals. When threatened, an animal either attacks or retreats, then continues with its life in the present moment while we humans divide our time mostly between the past and the future, rarely experiencing life in the present. K warned us decades ago that as technology advanced, the more violent we would become as human beings and as a society overall. He was not wrong. We, humans, react with even greater forms of clinging or aversion to the feelings and events of our lives than in years passed. We start and end relationships via text messages and say things online we would never say in person. We remember back to childhood our anger and hurts as well as our fleeting moments of pleasure and cling to resentments with a vengeance. Some of us are still angry over incidents that happened twenty, thirty years ago or more yet unwilling to seek reconciliation or closure, trapped in various cycles of savior, persecutor, and victim consciousness. Some of us are continually attempting to re-connect with a long-lost sense of pleasure or image of greatness we felt earlier in life disappointed over how our lives have played out over time. How could these reactions not affect the quality of our lives? Is it at all possible to experience the present moment when we are wrapped up in obsessing over the past or fantasizing about the future?

Author Joseph Goldstein proposed that at the heart of all schools of Buddhist thought lies a universal teaching, a "One Dharma" that can serve to unite us in our search for truth as well as clarify that truth for us. He maintained that to discover the essence of that "truth," we must ask the following questions:

"What works?

What works to free the mind from suffering?
What works to accomplish the heart of compassion?
What works to awaken us from the dream states of our ignorance?"[4]

Equipped with these profound questions and the understanding that humanity urgently requires a global shift in consciousness, we might consider that the "One Dharma" suggested by Joseph Goldstein resonates not only within Buddhism but across various spiritual traditions. Perhaps there exists a "One Dharma" that could serve as a foundation for the entirety of spiritual life. What might this "One Dharma" look like? The word *dhamma* (Skt. *dharma*) in Buddhism has many different translations depending on how the word is used. It can mean righteousness, teaching, moral law, eternal law, duty, "the way," – it pertains to the nature of reality as perceived through the universal truths as taught by Buddha. In Hinduism, this concept is described as cosmic law, which defines right behavior within the framework of social order. *Dhamma* is the term that encompasses all the teachings of Buddha; it is the way leading from illusion to enlightenment.

"*Everyone talks about Dhamma but no one understands it.*
Practicing purity of mind - this is true Dhamma."
- S. N. Goenka

Both K and Buddha are recognized as philosophers of their time and two of the greatest awakened minds in humanity's history. Neither sought to establish a religion around their teachings, nor did they desire followers, wealth, prestige, or power. Instead, each aimed to share their insights with the world to foster higher consciousness, compassion, greater intelligence, and an end to suffering. However, they understood that only a small number of people, if any, would fully grasp their teachings or put them into practice. Despite this awareness, both continued to teach tirelessly throughout their lives. In this exploration, we delve into both their lives and backgrounds as well as their teachings around the end of suffering.

While we are fortunate to have access to many of K's talks and dialogues recorded in real time, the teachings shared by the Buddha after his enlightenment were passed down orally for 400 years before being committed to writing. This leaves ample room for interpretation, misconceptions, and misunderstandings. Additionally, many "spiritual" books from the late 1800s to early 1900s, particularly those on the Buddha, Buddhism, and Theosophy, are difficult to find in both print and digital formats, many now out of print and no longer in circulation.

On Comparison, Measurement & Duality

A fundamental aspect of K's teachings revolved around the human being's unconscious drive to compare and measure – both activities, from his observation, being products of thought generated from a fragmented mind. He also preferred not to use the term "individual," as its definition implies a single, indivisible entity, whereas the psyche of many humans appears fragmented in numerous ways. K said:

"*We live in fragments. You are one thing at the office, another at home; you talk about democracy and in your heart you are autocratic; you talk about loving your neighbours, yet kill him with competition; there is one part of you working, looking, independently of the other. Are you aware of this fragmentary existence in yourself? And is it possible for a brain that has broken up its own functioning, its own thinking, into fragments – is it possible for such a brain to be aware of the whole field? Is it possible to look at the whole of consciousness completely, totally, which means to be a total human being?*"[5]

Humans compare ideas, beliefs, opinions, places, people, and things. They especially compare themselves to other people or some kind of ideal they are striving towards - obsessed with becoming a better version of themselves – desperately attempting to name their one life purpose and to feel some sense of meaning in their lives. This behavior clearly indicates a deep internal schism within the person as well as the society which encourages comparison, competition, and ultimately division. Often, this behavior is outside the realm of conscious awareness indicating that it is most likely a learned behavior that children observed within their own families of origin, through educational systems, society, on television or various forms of media, and eventually have come to adopt as their own way of seeing the world. If this is truly the case, this activity of comparison could be said to be a result of one's own early conditioning. K was adamant that our thinking has been conditioned through childhood educational systems from the time of the Greeks onward because without thinking based on measurement, comparison, reward, and punishment, we would not have the technological advancements that we have today (Krishnamurti, *Can Humanity Change?* 24). Additionally, this striving towards reward and away from punishment appears to be a key element in the creation of psychological time - chronological time being necessary for activities such as building a house, solving a complex math problem, learning a new language, etc. However, the concept of psychological time appeared to K to be primarily illusory. For example: "I need time to get better, be better, get enlightened, become the best version of myself," etc. K would argue that these concepts could be realized outside of psychological time through total attention to "what is" and via insight.

Conditioning, however, also takes place in adolescence and adulthood as we continue to compete, compare, and measure ourselves against others to establish our value and worthiness which may be one of the greatest sources of internal conflict within ourselves. K would often say to members of his audience, "Don't ask who the speaker is." He encouraged people to look at themselves and inquire "Who am I?" Many sought to understand K's specific formula for enlightenment in hopes of arriving at the same destination that he had arrived at himself. In his famous speech, "Truth is a Pathless Land," K explained that there is no singular path to self-actualization or self-realization. Rather, it is an individual inside job that each of us must endeavor if we are to know ourselves and liberate ourselves from the prison of our own mind. According to K:

"*If I am all the time measuring myself against you, struggling to be like you, then I am denying what I am myself. Therefore I am creating an illusion. When I have understood that comparison in any form leads only to greater illusion and greater misery, just as when I analyse myself, add to my knowledge of myself bit by bit, or identify myself with something outside myself, whether it be the State, a saviour or an ideology – when I understand that all such processes lead only to greater conformity and therefore greater conflict – when I see all this I put it completely away. Then my mind is no longer seeking.*"[6]

Some of K's followers appeared to be consumed with the idea that if they could learn his secret formula for awakening, they might achieve similar results. However, K was firm in his conviction that he could not share that information. He often asked the question to his audiences "What happens when you discover something for yourself?" If K hoped for anything, it would be that people would investigate their own experiences and minds and discover lucidity and self-awareness for themselves. In Ravi Ravrindra's short story, "The Mill and the Mill Pond: A Twenty-year Conversation with J. Krishnamurti," he describes an afternoon meeting with K in the orange grove in Ojai, California. K was pruning some trees and sharing some stories from his past. Quite unexpectedly, Ravi Ravindra asked K:

"'What exactly is the Process?'
I knew immediately that I had chosen a wrong moment to ask this. He looked at me sadly and said, 'This is what everyone wants to know. Then they will start imitating it and faking it. No, it cannot be said.'"[7]

A central theme, therefore, in K's teachings insists that the person must come to this truth by and for themselves in order to reach higher levels of conscious awareness.

"*The question of whether or not there is a God or truth or reality; or whatever you like to call it, can never be answered by books, by priests, philosophers or saviors. Nobody and nothing can answer the question but you yourself and that is why you must know yourself. Immaturity lies only in total ignorance of self. To understand yourself is the beginning of wisdom*."[8]

In the pursuit of a greater understanding of human suffering, scholars have attempted to find common themes within different spiritual teachings using comparative research. K's teachings, for example, have been compared to the teachings of Buddha. Students, teachers, philosophers, and spiritual seekers alike, have made and continue to make attempts to directly link the two men and their teachings and/or to point out their fundamental differences in an attempt to bring a greater intellectual understanding of the nature of spiritual life and the desire for freedom from suffering. K, himself, often wondered why such a comparison should be made and questioned its relevance in understanding what he viewed as the essential work of all beings – the greater understanding of ourselves.[9] K was fundamentally opposed to comparison and spoke passionately against its use for he viewed it as a thought-created activity – a distraction from the challenge of observing one's own mind in action in real time. The following quotes, which speak to K's inquiry into the relevance of comparison, are excerpts from the Oak Grove Talks in Ojai, California, 1945:

"*…With most of us, thought is the result of comparison, of judgement. Through approximation we think we are understanding, but is understanding born of comparison, judgement? Or is it the outcome of non-comparative thought? If you would understand something do you compare it with something else or do you study it for itself?*"[10]

"*If you do not compare, judge, then you will be confronted with yourself and this will give clarity and strength to uncover great depths. This is essential for the understanding of Reality. When there is no self-approximation then thought is liberated from duality: the problem and the conflict with the opposites fall away. In this freedom, there is a revolutionary, creative understanding.*"[11]

K explained that as long as thought is engaged in the activity of comparison which stems from conditioning, duality must exist (Krishnamurti, *Can Humanity Change?* 17). Duality is yet another function of the mind whereby the mental creation of opposites serves to reinforce the images of "self" and "other." K used examples such as: I am angry [I should not be angry], or I am sad [I should not be sad]. By forming certain judgments - such as good versus bad and right versus wrong - people engage in comparative thinking, establishing rigid criteria for their experiences unconsciously diminishing their own sense of internal freedom. This often leads to a fragmented or non-holistic perspective of the world and one's place within it.

"*Demand is born out of duality: 'I am unhappy and I must be happy." In that very demand that I must be happy is unhappiness. When one makes an effort to be good, in that very goodness is its opposite, evil. Everything affirmed contains its own opposite, and effort to overcome strengthens that against which it strives. When you demand an experience of truth or reality, that very demand is born out of your discontent with what is, and therefore the demand creates the opposite. And in the opposite there is what has been. So one must be free of this incessant demand, otherwise there will be no end to the corridor of duality. This means knowing yourself so completely that the mind is no longer seeking.*"[12]

In this regard, even language itself can be seen as a limitation, especially when terms like better, worse, and best are used as descriptors. Although K spoke of the dangers of comparison, many of those who followed the teachings and regarded him as a profound spiritual teacher, turned to comparison to articulate their personal experiences of his teachings. One of K's admirers, Aldous Huxley, wrote in a letter to a friend that listening to a talk given by K was:

"*…amongst the most impressive things I have listened to… it was like listening to the discourse of the Buddha…*"[13]

This statement exemplifies the tendency to compare an actual event with an imaginary one. It illustrates how readily the human mind seeks to understand a unique experience through the lens of comparison, rather than fully grasping the "what is" of the moment. When we hear Huxley's remark, we may make our own assumptions about the nature of the experience he was attempting to convey - perhaps we might think it was profoundly moving or a direct encounter with the divine. However, these are mere assumptions, leaving the reader without a true understanding of the experience Huxley intended to share.

Previous attempts to compare both K and the Buddha's teachings have concluded with the idea that the fundamental difference between the two teachings, specifically in regard to the Four Noble Truths, is that Buddha offered an Eightfold Path or "Middle Way" that leads one to the end of suffering while K firmly maintained that there is no path leading to the discovery of truth and further, that "Truth is a pathless land." R.K. Shringy's work, *Philosophy of J. Krishnamurti*, supports this position:

"He [K] perceives three levels of the awareness of the problem, which can be considered more or less analogous to the first three noble truths (Arya Atya) of Gautama the Buddha, but he significantly cuts out the fourth i.e., the noble path, for to him, to understand the problem is to solve it; and to him

'reality is a pathless land."[14]

The Noble Eightfold Path, however, appears to be less a traditional "path" and more a collection of eight "modes of living" or "ways of being in the world" that embody an organic spirituality rooted in individual insight. These modes of living outlined in the Buddha's First Sermon are integral to one another – each interconnected to the whole, much like the elements of the natural world. As presented in the sermon, the path lacks explicit instructions, yet integrating these modes of living or divisions may foster a life grounded in wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental mastery. Perhaps an easier way to view this "path" is not so much as a recipe or set of instructions but the natural result of living more harmoniously within the flow of life itself. Later discourses in the *Vinaya Pitaka* elaborate on topics such as morality, fundamental rules of conduct, and guidance for harmonious living. This complicates the notion that there is a significant difference in the teachings, as K frequently used Buddhist terms like "Right Thought" and "Right Action" without providing specific details on how to achieve understanding of those terms - other than through meditation, total attention, and insight. The essence of this work, then, is not to compare, but to investigate the parallels between both teachings on the liberation from suffering and to clarify how they can and do complement each other.

Philosophy, Religion & Ageless Wisdom

Buddhism, which has been regarded as both a philosophy and a religion, is a challenging subject to approach since it is so complex and varied between the different schools as seen in ***Part Two: The Buddha and Buddhism***. For this reason, this work focuses, as best it can, on available information pertaining to Siddhartha Gautama (before and after his enlightenment) and the earliest known teachings disseminated approximately 2,500 years ago preserved in the Pāli Canon as opposed to the topic of Buddhism in general.

The word philosophy was used as early as the 1300s and is comprised of the roots: *philo* – meaning loving and *sophia* – referring to knowledge and/or wisdom. Essentially, philosophy has been defined as the love of knowledge, the pursuit of wisdom and systematic investigation into deeper truths.[15] Religion, on the other hand, is an older word dating back to the 1200s defined as a "state of life bound by monastic vows" and "action of conduct indicating a belief in a divine power and reverence for and desire to please it." Both consider the elements of reality, morality, the vast subject of meaning and ultimately, human nature. Religion stands apart in that it also includes faith, rituals, and miracles. The Latin translation of the corresponding word, *religionem*, translates as "*respect for what is sacred, reverence for the gods; conscientiousness, sense of right, moral obligation; fear of the gods; divine service, religious observance; a religion, a faith, a mode of worship, cult; sanctity, holiness.*"[16] However, *religionem* can be further reduced to the root, *religio*, which can again be reduced to *re* and *ligare* where "re" is defined as meaning "return" and "ligare" meaning "to bind" inferring that the word religion could be translated as a "return to bondage."

Whether regarded as a philosophy or as a religion, it can be said that the earliest Buddhist teachings were part of a larger spiritual movement aimed at the liberation of mind while the later teachings and organizations that sprung forth could easily be considered less authentic

and ran the risk of being systematized and/or corrupted and ultimately used as a vehicle for so called "authorities" to maintain power and control over practitioners. As we tend to see corruption of power in many of the world's religions, this possibility should be considered. The motives and intentions of individual practitioners of Buddhism must also be taken into consideration as any teaching (Buddhist or otherwise) can be used as a vehicle for greater awakening or as a form of bypassing the realities of both inner and outer life. Buddhism used solely as means to help a person feel safe and secure in an uncertain and oftentimes chaotic world is not conducive to its original aims towards ultimate awakening and liberation.

"*What is known as 'Buddhism,' is a part of the common human heritage of wisdom, by which men have succeeded in overcoming this world, and in gaining immortality, or a deathless life.*"[17]

We witness on an almost daily basis the actions of modern-day religious leaders and their trusted servants, politicians, academic officials, medical professionals, etc. abusing their authority and influence on a global scale inflicting harm within their communities for selfish ends. It has been argued that one of the many reasons that the various religions exist throughout the world is to provide a platform for controlling individuals and societies as a whole (Orrante, 2008, 40). Most religions appear, on some level, to prey on the individual's yearning for a sense of belonging, acceptance, and forgiveness - without having to take any personal responsibility for their actions whatsoever. A perfect example of this would be the practice of confession within the Catholic church. Alternately, Buddhism aims to empower individuals to discover the truth of their experiences for themselves through meditation and contemplation. Krishnamurti once said in the early 1900s that "it was no measure of health to be considered well-adjusted to a sick society." Modern-day mental health professionals point people in the direction of psychological adjustment to society's rules instead of spiritual transformation. If religion and contemporary mental health strategies worked, the consciousness within our various communities and the world at large would not continue to degenerate and contribute to the suffering of humanity. What sets K and Buddha apart is that they encouraged interested parties to always question the words and teachings they shared. They empowered and inspired people to find their answers themselves and not at the feet of any "master." For example, Buddha preferred to be referred to as a guide and never as an authority (Conze, *A Short History of Buddhism*, 3). Both encouraged healthy skepticism, dialogue, and discouraged listeners from merely agreeing with them or accepting their teachings as absolute truth.

"*The freedom of thought allowed by the Buddha is unheard of elsewhere in the history of religions. This freedom is necessary because, according to the Buddha, man's emancipation depends on his own realization of Truth, and not on the benevolent grace of a god or any external power as a reward for his obedient good behavior.*"[18]

According to Edward Conze (1904-1979), a German British scholar, professor, and author of many Buddhist texts, Buddha was conveying something much more profound than a new philosophy. Conze characterized Buddhism as a purely rational religion that does not rely on faith. This aspect makes it particularly appealing in our modern industrial era, especially to those who are skeptical of mythology, miracles, and the occult. He goes on to describe the teachings of the Buddha as an ageless wisdom accessed by the Buddha through his pure

intentions and fierce commitment to meditation which was re-introduced into the consciousness of the people of his age with roots in ancient, immutable truths. Ageless wisdom often refers to timeless insights and truths that have been passed down through generations, through the ages, typically found in spiritual, philosophical, or traditional teachings. It emphasizes enduring principles that remain relevant across cultures and eras.

"The Buddha rediscovered a very ancient and long-standing, in fact an ageless wisdom, and that he did so in Bihar in India, round about 600 or 400 BC – the exact date is unknown. His re-formulation of the perennial wisdom was designed to counteract three evils.

1. ***Violence** had to be avoided in all of its forms, from the killing of humans and animals to the intellectual coercion of those that think otherwise.*
2. *The **'self'** or the fact that one holds on to oneself as an individual personality, was held to be responsible for all pain and suffering, which would in the end be finally abolished by the attainment of a state of self-extinction, technically known as 'Nirvana.'*
3. ***Death** was an error which could be overcome by those who entered 'the doors of the deathless', 'the gates of the undying'.*

Apart from providing antidotes to these three ills, the Buddha formulated no definite doctrines or creeds, but put his entire trust into the results obtained by training his disciples through a threefold process of moral restraint, secluded meditation and philosophical reflection."[19]

Commentary on Early Translations of Buddhist Literature

Throughout Buddhism's 2,500-year history, scriptures have often been translated from Indic languages into various other languages (excluding modern translations). Translators do their best to understand the technical terms accurately within the specific contexts of each work, considering their historical, cultural, and philosophical backgrounds. Thus, the translations we have today should be approached with mental agility and an open, contemplative mind. Translators select equivalent terms in the target language that are both reliable and as nuanced as possible. When suitable vocabulary is not available, they often resort to transliteration (e.g., Buddha, bodhisattva, dharma, etc.). Edward Conze highlighted in his 1959 book, *Buddhist Scriptures*, that translation discrepancies are not uncommon. For example, within the context of one scripture he analyzed, he found a man on page 203 described as "weak and decrepit" and on the following page the same man was described as "strong with powerful arms." Therefore, it is essential to approach all translations carefully and refrain from viewing any of these translations as entirely valid. Conze further discusses the translations he completed for *Buddhist Scriptures*:

"*Sanskrit words like Buddha, Nirvana, Bodhisattva and Dharma occur on every page. They cannot be possibly eliminated. The word 'Dharma,' in particular, is deliberately ambiguous, with up to ten meanings. On page 198 [of one specific scripture], for instance, we find 'dharmas' first used twice in the sense of 'properties;' at its third occurrence it means 'teachings;' two lines later the meaning has shifted to 'events,' only to move on to 'true facts' a little later on. In this case it would have been simple to replace the term by its equivalents, but elsewhere two or three meanings are simultaneously intended. The reader may sigh, and wish that Buddhists had been more unambiguous in their use of words. They*

obviously were not. In this respect, as in much else, they differ radically from contemporary 'linguistic analysts.' Buddhist thinkers had weighty reasons for preferring ambiguous, multivalent terms, and a mere translator must respect their preference. To rephrase their sayings would be commentary, not translation."[20]

Another challenge lies in deciphering the actual meanings of some of the words contained within these historical translations. For instance, the first division of the Noble Eightfold Path which has been translated, depending on the text one references, as Right Views (Davids: 1881, Coomaraswamy: 1916, Carus: 1917, Conze: 1951), Right Knowledge (Besant: 1934 and Humphreys: 1962), Right Belief (Besant: 1934) or Right Doctrine (Arnold: 1879). This obviously leaves quite a bit of room for interpretation. Another example is contained within the seventh division of Buddha's Eightfold Path referred to as Right Mindfulness. Does our understanding of mindfulness today align with its meaning 2,500 years ago? Something to consider.

Notes

[1] Conze, *Buddhism*, 45.
[2] Humphreys, *Buddhism*, 16.
[3] Goldstein, J. (2001, Winter). One Dharma. *Tricycle*, Vol. XI, 70.
[4] *Ibid.*, 68.
[5] Krishnamurti, *Freedom from the Known*, 30.
[6] *Ibid.*, 32.
[7] Ravindra, *Krishnamurti: Two Birds on One Tree*, 74-75.
[8] Krishnamurti, *Freedom from the Known*, 12.
[9] See dialogue "Are You Not Saying What the Buddha Said?" Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Ltd., *Questioning Krishnamurti – J. Krishnamurti in Dialogue*. (San Francisco: Thorsons, 1996), 18-38.
[10] Krishnamurti, J. *Early Talks, Vol. VII*, 2.
[11] *Ibid.*, 3.
[12] Krishnamurti, *Freedom from the Known*, 113-114.
[13] Jayakar, *Krishnamurti – A Biography*, 89.
[14] Shringy, R.K., *Philosophy of J. Krishnamurti: A Systematic Study*, 348-349.
[15] Reference: https://www.etymonline.com/word/philiosophy
[16] Reference: https://www.etymonline.com/word/religion
[17] Conze, *Buddhism: its essence and development*, 11.
[18] Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, 2.
[19] Conze, *Buddhism: A Short History*, 1.
[20] Retrieved from: https://www.scribd.com/document/497529738/Buddhist-Scriptures-by-Edward-Conze

Part Two: The Buddha & Buddhism

The Prince, Siddhartha Gautama

The literal translation of the word Buddha in the Pāli language is awakened and/or enlightened. It's root, *buddh*, can be defined as: "to awake, to know and/or to perceive." The word Buddha, therefore, refers to the state of an awakened being and not to one specific individual. The enigmatic historical figure commonly referred to as the Buddha has been known by many names from twenty-nine B.C. to present. Early twentieth century authors, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and I. B. Horner, have identified him by his family name Gotama or Gautama to differentiate him from the numerous Buddhas who came before him[1] and sometimes refer to him as a *Bodhisatta* to indicate his state prior to awakening. Bodhisattas are considered humans motivated by compassion to seek enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. Buddhist scholar, Edward Conze, uses another traditional family name, "Shakyamuni, the sage from the tribe of the Shakyas," in his descriptions of the living man. In Theosophy, he has been referred to as the Lord of Love and the Blessed One. Many contemporary authors also use his birth name, Siddhattha (Skt. Siddhārtha) Gautama, or simply Buddha. "*He was known to his disciples as 'the Knower,' 'the Enlightened,' and 'the Wake*"[2] and referred to himself as a *Bhikkhu* before enlightenment and *Tathāgata* (also used for other Buddhas) after enlightenment. While *Tathā-gata* is thought to mean "*one who has thus gone*," another appellation used is *Tathā-āgata*, "*one who has thus come*" and sometimes *Tathā-agata*, "*one who has thus not gone*." The meaning behind these descriptions could indicate that the *Tathāgata* is beyond all coming and going, therefore beyond all transient phenomena.[3]

"*Childers, in his Pāli Dictionary (l875), says… 'It is quite evident that the term tathagata was first applied to a sentient being generally and afterwards transferred to a Buddha. As a name for a Buddha it means the Being par excellence, the Great Being… Gautama Buddha frequently in the Suttas speaks of himself as the Tathagata, and the epithet is analogous to that of Son of Man applied to Himself by Jesus Christ. As a name for a sentient being it means 'one who goes in like manner,' i.e., one who goes the way of all flesh, one who is subject to death, a mortal*."[4]

Born on the borders of Nepal and India, Gautama was the only child of King Suddhodana of the Sākiya clan and his Queen, Mahā Māyā. Although exact dates are not known, it has been estimated that he was born during the year 620 BC[5] and died approximately in 543 BC (Arnold, 1890). Seven days after Gautama's birth, his mother died and he was subsequently raised by her sister, Māhajapati[6], also a wife of King Suddhodana. Gautama was raised in the lap of luxury. It was his father's desire that his son would never know the painful, yet immutable, aspects of human life: sickness, old age, and death. Therefore, anytime Gautama traveled into the city, his father arranged to sanitize the entire city landscape of any person(s) that displayed any of these aforementioned qualities. Gautama lived his early life in ignorance that suffering, and death were realities of human life. He eventually married his cousin, Yasodā,[7] and they had one son, Rāhula[8], who would later become his disciple (Coomaraswamy, *Buddha and The Gospel of Buddhism*, 9).

The prince eventually grew restless and disinterested in his cloistered world of hedonistic

pleasures and abundance. An inner spiritual yearning had begun brewing within the depths of his being. He felt called to leave the royal grounds once again and began planning for what would be his last visit to the city as a member of the royal family. Upon hearing the news, King Suddhodana again sent orders to sweep the city of the elderly, the diseased, the down-trodden, or any sign of death as any such individual could serve as evidence that the organic cycle of life and death was indeed a reality. Whether it be through the influence of the gods or the result of fate, on this particular visit to the city, the prince finally came face to face with sickness, old age, and death. He vowed to seek out and overcome the limitations of mortality.

Heading back towards the palace after his harsh confrontation with the ills of man, Gautama traveled through his great city with a heavy heart. In the distance, he heard the healing sounds of a woman's voice singing and wondered to himself what, if anything, could bring any sort of lasting joy or peace into one's life. An answer silently came to him: "*When the fire of lust is extinguished, then there is peace; and when the fires of resentment and glamour are dead, then there is peace. Sweet is the lesson this singer has taught me, for it is the Nibbāna of peace that I have sought. This day I shall relinquish the household life, nothing will I seek but Nibbāna itself.*"[9] He left his family soon after to embark on his own spiritual quest in search of a way to liberate all beings from the stark reality of human suffering – "*to remove the veils of ignorance and sin*."[10]

The Great Effort & Enlightenment

Having abandoned his world of material comforts, Gautama wandered until he met with a group of five Brahman ascetics determined to lead a life of rigorous self-discipline. For six years, he practiced austerities consuming only one grain of rice per day until his body, gaunt and severely malnourished, began to fail him, his mind filled with confusion. On the verge of death, he realized the path of mortification had not brought liberation from the prison of the mind. Gautama decided to resume begging for food in the nearby villages so that he could recover his health and continue his quest for enlightenment. The five Brahmans shunned him for his decision, and they parted ways. The ascetics headed for Benares while Gautama proceeded solely on his own to pursue the "Great Effort"[11] (Conze, *Gotama the Buddha*, 3.). Near complete exhaustion, he wandered until he found a great Bodhi-tree where he could take rest. Unbeknownst to him, this was the exact place a local girl named Sujātā lay daily offerings of milk-rice for the spiritual seekers of her village. In time, she arrived and offered him a bowl of milk-rice which he gladly accepted, setting aside enough portions from that single offering to last for forty-nine days. He vowed not to move from his seat beneath the great Bodhi-tree until he achieved the supreme liberation (Coomaraswamy, *Buddha & The Gospel of Buddhism*, 29-32). Just as soon as Gautama was settled beneath the great tree, Māra,[12] the God of Death, aware of Gautama's vow to attain enlightenment, launched a full-scale attack on the Bodhisatta.

"*Māra led his armies against him. The Gods were terrified and fled in alarm; the Bodhisatta sat there alone, with only his own transcendent virtues for bodyguard. Māra's assault with weapons of thunder and lightning, darkness, flood, and fire, and all the temptations presented by Māra's three beautiful daughters, left the Bodhisatta literally unaffected and unmoved. Māra, unable to recover the throne to which he had laid claim, could only retire. The Gods returned, and celebrated the prince's victory; and so night fell.*"[13]

Still seated under the great Bodhi-tree, Gautama the Buddha surrendered himself to the present moment. Through his mind's eye, supreme sight achieved, he witnessed an endless stream of evils born of self-serving ignorance weaving through the tapestry of life itself. He recognized how selfhood, the identification of oneself as a separate, individual entity, enslaves humanity preventing men and women from ever realizing the results of their wicked behavior derived from their obnoxious desires. The Blessed One was absolutely crystal clear that the craving for pleasure and avoidance of pain blinded men and women from comprehending how their selfish desires were at the root of the suffering all humans endure over the course of their lifetime. He saw that when death destroyed the individuality of man, it was man's thirst for existence as well as his attachment to the self that was the catalyst for rebirth. And so, the Blessed One announced:

"'*…they continue to move in the coil and can find no escape from the hell of their own making. And how empty are their pleasures, how vain are their endeavors! Hollow like the plantain-tree and without contents like the bubble. The world is full of evil and sorrow, because it is full of lust. Men go astray because they think that delusion is better than truth. Rather than truth they follow error, which is pleasant to look at in the beginning but in the end causes anxiety, tribulation, and misery*.'"[14]

Gautama sat for seven weeks (forty-nine days) in a deep state of tranquility and contemplation as he received and embodied the *Dhamma*, the Eternal Law,[15] which would eventually be recorded in the *Pāli Tipitaka* that we have today also known as *Theravāda*, the Doctrine of the Elders. In earlier times, one translation of *Dhamma* included "the law of nature" or "the truth."[16] The cause of all sorrow, the Buddha now realized, arose at the very beginning of life as conditioning sets in and we perceive ourselves as individualized beings. "*If the selfishness of selfhood is destroyed, you will be above birth, old age, disease, and death, and you will escape all suffering*."[17] This *Dhamma* that the Buddha now fully realized included the Four Noble Truths as well as the Noble Eightfold Path, the supreme remedy to the rampant sickness of ignorance. He was now enlightened. The Buddha had attained *vimutti* (freedom), *nibbana*[18] (unconditional happiness and lucidity), and *amatam* (immortality), (Coomaraswamy & Horner, *Gotama the Buddha*, 4). The Buddha proclaimed:

"*Happy the solitude of him who is full of joy,*
Who has learnt the Truth, who has seen the Truth.
Happy he who is this world has no ill-will,
Self-restrained to all beings that have life.
Happy is freedom from lusts, the getting right away from them,
The highest bliss is freedom from the pride of the thought 'I am.'"[19]

Momentarily, however, the Buddha experienced doubts as to whether it would be worthwhile to impart his newfound awareness of liberation and freedom from suffering knowing that the doctrine itself would be difficult to grasp for many and undesirable to most. What made him alter his view? He saw that it was his duty to teach what he had learned as clearly and simply as possible, and to trust that the truth would find its way to those who were meant to receive it. Buddha was clear that his teachings represented the only way of salvation and every being had an equal right to have access to this information. He committed to begin his teachings with his five late companions who had abandoned him when he broke his fast (Olcott, *The*

Buddhist Catechism, 68). Buddha also realized that he must choose his words with great discernment to ensure the five Bhikkhus might grasp his essential message (Davids, *Early Buddhism*, 40). Although skeptical at first, the five Bhikkhus greeted him with respect and reverence, eager to hear the words he had come to share with them. As the evening grew near, an unknown Singhalese author is quoted as describing the scene as such:

"'*The evening… was like a lovely female; the stars were as pearls upon her neck, the blue clouds were her braided hair, and the expanse was her flowing robe. As a crown she had the heavens; the three worlds were as her body; her eyes were like the white lotus; her voice was like the humming of the bee. To worship Buddha, and list to the first proclaiming of the bana, this lovely female came.' All the worlds in which there was sentient existence were emptied of their inhabitants, so that the congregation assembled as in number infinite; but when the god Sekra blew his shell, 'all became still, as a waveless sea.' Each of the countless listeners thought that the sage was looking towards himself, and speaking to him in his own tongue, though the language he used was Magadhi. Then Buddha opened his mouth, and preached the Dhamma-Chakkappawattana-suttan. This sermon is of importance, not only as being the first preached by Buddha; but as containing the germ thoughts of his entire system*."[20]

In that discourse, Buddha outlined the four integral principles, or 'holy truths,' that would later form the core foundation of all the different schools of Buddhism to emerge following his death. Those holy truths included: suffering as omnipresent, the origin and cause of suffering, the cessation / destruction of suffering and the cure and final remedy by which to end that suffering, the Noble Eightfold Path. Seemingly simplistic, this discourse is rich with complexities, so much so, that the understanding and integration of this initial teaching continues to mystify spiritual seekers of all walks of life while leading others towards salvation and a life of peace.

Out of his compassion for all sentient beings, the Buddha committed to transmitting this ageless wisdom far and wide. Buddha continued to travel and teach the *Dhamma* for the next forty-five years. He founded a monastic order dedicated to assisting sincere disciples who sought after the everlasting freedom and peace that he had realized for himself. He attracted many seekers who would abandon their household lives in pursuit of self-realization. The Buddha died at the age of eighty. Following his death, his closest disciples compiled his teachings, referred to as the "Words of the Enlightened One" (Coomaraswamy, *Buddha & The Gospel of Buddhism*, 10).

Early Buddhism, The Teachings of the Elders

Buddhism, primarily based on the teachings of the Buddha after his enlightenment, encompasses a wide array of traditional schools, each with its own unique scriptures. The total body of Buddhist writings is vast, spanning tens of thousands of pages. Over time, Buddhism spread from Northern India throughout Asia, China, Korea, Japan, and the West. It can best be described as a multi-faceted religion-philosophy comprised of three main branches (*Theravāda*, *Mahayana*, and *Vajrayana*), sometimes referred to as "vehicles," sharing the same ultimate goal of assisting the Buddhist practitioner in discovering or achieving his or her own enlightenment. Conversely, Buddhism has also been referred to as an Eastern form of spirituality. "*It's doctrine, in its basic assumptions, is identical with many other teachings all over*

the world, teachings which may be called 'mystical.'"[21] Available Buddhist literature is vast containing scripture and doctrine written in a dozen languages representing the different schools of thought found throughout the world. What these documents share in common is their attempt to convey the central teaching delivered at the Deer Park in Sarnath (near Benares): the Four Noble Truths of Suffering, articulated shortly after the Buddha's enlightenment. The earliest known written records of Buddhism were scribed in the Pāli language, hand-written on palm-leaves. (Davids, *Buddhism*, p.11). Later records were written in Sanskrit (Skt.) language.

Suttas, also known as sutras (Skt.) meaning "*string, thread*" are texts which claim to have been spoken by the Buddha himself which always begin with the words, "Thus I have heard at one time. The Lord dwelt at…" or "Thus have I heard…" The "I" refers to the disciple, Ānanda, who recited these discourses immediately after the Buddha's death having committed them to memory. Whenever the Buddha delivered a teaching, it is said that his devoted disciples and advanced monks, upon hearing the discourse, would commit the discourse to memory (word-for-word). These teachings were then considered persevered and passed on from teacher to student. This apparently went on for a period of approximately 400 years; the writing of the Pāli Canon commencing around eighty B.C. (Davids, *Buddhism*, p.19).

"*Two methods were adopted in India to aid this power of memory. One, adopted chiefly by the grammarians, was to clothe the rules to be remembered in very short enigmatical phrases (called sutras or threads), which taxed the memory but little, while they required elaborate commentaries to render them intelligible. The other, the method adopted in Buddhist writings (both Sutta and Vinaya), was, firstly the use of stock phrases, of which the commencement once given, the remainder followed as a matter of course; and secondly, the habit of repeating whole sentences, or even paragraphs, which in our modern books would be understood or inferred, instead of being expressed. The stock phrases, which must be distinguished from the repetitions, belong certainly to a very early period of Buddhism, and many of them recur in Sanskrit as well as in Pali texts. One result of these numerous repetitions of phrases and paragraphs is that the preservation of the text, when once established, was rendered very easy*."[22]

Some of the teachers who heard the teachings directly from the Buddha were referred to as Arahants which is defined as "perfected ones" or "worthy ones" – those who had completed the path to enlightenment and had achieved the state known as *nibbāna* (Skt., *nirvana*) which Buddhists maintain as an explanation for how the teachings themselves were not misinterpreted or corrupted over time. The Arahants, having achieved enlightenment were known to possess extraordinary powers of attention, concentration, remembrance, and were easily capable of retaining the doctrines in their original format for later elucidation amongst students. The delineation between a Buddha and an Arahant lies in the means by which the individual had extinguished the fires of desire within himself; a Buddha was able to reach this peak of infinite intelligence on his own while the Arahant had been guided on his path by a mentor or teacher (Coomaraswamy & Horner, *Gotama the Buddha*, 4).

Enlightenment, therefore, was a possibility for any man or woman so willing to invest in the meditation and contemplation of the activities of one's mind either on their own or under the guidance of a teacher. At the time of the Buddha's death, many of his devoted disciples had

not yet attained enlightenment. However, they did possess powerful memories due to extensive training and experience with meditation. They were considered stewards of the authentic teachings devoted to preserving the teachings in their original state.

"The Buddha was not only a human being; he claimed no inspiration from any god or external power either. He attributed all his realization, attainments and achievements to human endeavor and human intelligence. A man and only a man can become a Buddha. Every man has within himself the potentiality of becoming a Buddha, if he so wills it and endeavours. We can call the Buddha a man par excellence. He was so perfect in his 'human-ness' that he came to be regarded later in popular religion almost as 'super-human'. Man's position, according to Buddhism, is supreme. Man is his own master, and there is no higher being or power that sits in judgement over his destiny… according to the Buddha, man's emancipation depends on his own realization of Truth, and not on the benevolent grace of a god or any external power as a reward for his obedient good behavior."[23]

Additional sutras were composed centuries after the Buddha's death and the true authors of these later sutras are not known. They were not spoken by the historical Buddha himself. Over time, many sects had arisen within Buddhism with numbers ranging from eighteen to thirty (Conze, *Buddhism*, 28).

"*The different sects tended to have their organization and Scriptures. In many monasteries members of different sects nevertheless lived together in perfect amity; it was generally recognized that the goal may be reached by different roads and the sects showed great tolerance to each other, although occasional sharp religious invective was of course not entirely unknown. They all shared one common Dharma, although it is important to realize that the verbal formulation of this Dharma did not exist in a brief, handy and unambiguous form. It was transmitted orally, to prevent it from reaching those unfit to receive it, but there was so much of it that no one person could keep it all in mind. In consequence different parts of the Scriptures were handed to specialists who knew by heart say, the Vinaya or the Sutras, or a part of the Sutras, or the Abhidharma, and so on*."[24]

Each school or branch of Buddhism outlines its different approaches to the same goal, the liberation of the mind from the torments of suffering caused by ignorance. Buddhists were, however, sharply divided as to the value of these later sutras. One branch, known as the *Hinayana*, or Lesser Vehicle, maintained that works composed after 480 B.C. and not recited at the First Buddhist Council immediately after the Buddha's death, could not be authentic representations of the Buddha's own words and at their worst, "*could be no more than mere poetry and fairy tale.*"[25] We can naturally conclude that Buddhist teachings may not be a direct reflection of the Buddha's original intentions with the exception perhaps being the scriptures and doctrines contained in the Theravadin tradition.

The Theravadin school of Buddhism represents the earliest known teachings of the Buddha as recited by his disciple, Ānanda, during the First Buddhist Council following the death of Buddha. The initial Theravāda scriptures were divided into two categories, *Dhamma* (doctrine) and *Vinaya* (basic rules of conduct). Later, another division took place which included *Vinaya, Dhamma* or *Sutta*, and *Abhidhamma* (philosophy of mind) and the teachings continued to spread throughout the Indian subcontinent (Conze, *Buddhism*, 28). The foundational doctrine of Theravāda Buddhism is referred to as the Pāli Tipitaka (*ti*, "three" +

pitaka, "baskets"). The *Vinaya Pitaka* is comprised of individual and collective guidance for harmonious living, basic rules of conduct for monks and nuns. The *Sutta Pitaka* is the collection of suttas, or discourses, attributed to the Buddha and a few of his closest disciples, containing all the central teachings of Theravāda Buddhism. And lastly, the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* contains the psycho-ethical teachings of the Buddha otherwise known as Buddhist psychology. Theravāda Buddhism was established for those who had abandoned the life of the householder and committed themselves to the practice of the *Dhamma*. It was and is a path for the few as it was difficult requiring a steadfast commitment to a disciplined life and a commitment to actualizing the principle of enlightenment from within.

Self & No-Self

Buddhism views the living human as consisting of five parts commonly referred to as heaps, aggregates, and/or clusters which are given the technical name of *khandhas* (Skt. *skandhas)*. These are the five mental and material aspects of man which lead to clinging, attachment, and self-grasping (i.e., maintaining a belief in an individual, separate self). The *khandhas* are comprised of the physical body, feelings, perceptions, impulses, emotions, and acts of consciousness (Conze, *Buddhism*, 14). Any attachment a person forms (e.g., people, places, things, ideas, beliefs, relationships, etc.) can be traced back to one or more of these aggregates which are temporary, conditioned phenomena and always changing. The creation of a "self" is said to occur outside of these aggregates. This notion of a self, according to Buddha, is illusory as there is no self contained within or as a result of the inter-relation between the different aggregates. The impermanence of these aggregates as well as our human tendency to cling to them leads to suffering.

"*The belief in individuality is said to arise from the invention of a 'self' over and above those five heaps. The belief expresses itself in the assumption that any of this is 'mine,' or that 'I am' any of this, or that any of this 'is myself.' Or, in other words, in the belief that 'I am this,' or that 'I have this,' or that 'this is in me,' or that 'I am in this.' The fact of individuality disappears with the belief in it, since it is no more than a gratuitous imagination. When the individual, as constituted by an arbitrary lump taken from those five heaps, ceases to exist, the result is Nirvana - the goal of Buddhism.*"[26]

Life is a continual movement of striving, grasping, and becoming from one lifetime to the next as witnessed by Buddha upon his own enlightenment sitting under the Bodhi-tree. He saw the cyclical nature of birth, growth, decay, and death occurring over thousands of lifetimes. K once described life as "a painful struggle with moments of enlightened peace." Like Buddha, K had his own experience with sorrow and deathlessness upon losing his beloved brother to tuberculosis. See ***Part Four: Jiddu Krishnamurti & Theosophy*** for additional information.

Many people maintain a desire to see the self (i.e., their self) as something that is unique, original, and permanent. According to Buddhism, it is our attachment to this flawed idea of "me," "mine," and "I" that is the root cause of all suffering we experience in our lifetime – the root cause of all ignorance and attachment. Once the self is established in childhood, it is that self that identifies itself with transitory objects, people, experiences, etc. to affirm its worth and value as well as to establish status within the familial and/or societal hierarchy.

Early attachments begin to take shape to power, prestige, caste, possessions, the body and its appearance, social position, thoughts/beliefs, and the mind itself. None of these are permanent. Nor is our worth as a human being determined by our physical appearance or body weight, the type of car we drive, the amount of money we have in the bank, how many college degrees one possesses, our I.Q. score, etc.

While Buddha preferred to maintain silence around questions regarding the self, it is clear from the early teachings that the human must be more than just five heaps of impermanent "stuff" also known in modern psychology as the ego. Nowhere in the scriptures does Buddha deny the existence of Self or Soul or God (Coomaraswamy & Horner, *Gotama the Buddha*, 27). Thanissaro Bhikkhu, an American Buddhist monk and translator of the *Dhammapada*, notes that when directly asked about the existence of the self, the Buddha declined to provide an answer. He later explained that his refusal stemmed from the belief that holding either position - self or no-self - was unhelpful for practitioners. He recognized that choosing one of these extremes could lead to a wrong view, making the path of practice exceedingly difficult, if not impossible.

> "*To put the matter another way, 'That which is called the ego, which says, 'I am,' is merely an aggregate of skandhas, a complex of sensations, ideas, thoughts, emotions and volitions. It is not an eternal immutable entity behind these. The word 'I' remains the same, but its significance continually changes. Or, as Dr. McGovern puts it, 'Buddhism insists that the soul is not a rigid, unchanging, self-constituted entity, but a living, complex, changing, evolving organism*."[27]

When looking to the early Buddhist texts, there appears to be a differentiation between self (with a lower case "s") and Self (with a capital "S"). For example, Buddha has been described as "one whose Self is awake." The Buddha was quoted as saying "I have taken refuge in the Self." He was known to encourage others to "seek for the Self" or "make the Self your refuge and your lamp" (Coomaraswamy & Horner, *Gotama the Buddha*, 27). In this sense, it appears that man contains both a lower and a higher version of "self." According to Buddhist scholar, Christmas Humphreys, Buddhism perceives the nature of "self" as being comprised of three different aspects:[28]

1. **Spirit or *Atman*:** Represents the true or eternal "Self" that exists within every person and belongs to no one, an undefiled raw consciousness that observes the world's activities while remaining an external witness. It is not merely "my Spirit," but rather the eternal Spirit that resides, mostly untapped, within all of humanity. We can also consider it not as a distinct entity, but as a force that enables us to perceive the interconnectedness of all things and beings - a gateway to our true nature.
2. **Soul:** Often referred to as one's character, this is shaped by behavior over time and influenced by karmic factors - essentially the causes and effects accumulated from previous lifetimes. These karmic influences carry over from one life to the next, even though we rarely retain memories of our past lives in any present lifetime.
3. **Body (expressed as Personality):** This can be described as the lower "self" as well as the *khandhas*, which seems to be trapped in repetitive behaviors aimed at maintaining a sense of individuality in the person.

Humphreys felt strongly that Buddha's teachings on self, per other western Buddhist scholars, were misguided and not accurate and that an immortal entity residing within the minds of all humans was not in alignment with what Buddha taught.

"*The Teaching of the Buddha on self is clear, yet a number of western Buddhists and Theravadins ignore this clear tradition in favour of a doctrine of their own. The Atman of the Upanishads is the absolute S E L F, and is the property of no man. But this by the Buddha's day had become debased into an immortal entity within each mind of which it was even possible to give the size… the Buddha taught the doctrine of non-Atman (pali: Anatta) in which he analysed the thing called man and proved it to contain no single permanent factor, nor any thing resembling a changeless and immortal 'soul'.*"[29]

In Buddhism, there are three signs of being (or three marks of existence) which are central to the first noble truth – which if not brought into awareness result in an illusion-based, materialistic life. These three signs represent the experiential reality that Buddha experienced: *Anatta*, *Dukkha* and *Annica*. The first concept relates to the subject of *Anatta*, which asserts that there is no permanent self or soul. It emphasizes that all things and experiences are in constant flux (*Annica*), making them inherently impermanent, and acknowledges that suffering (*Dukkha*) is an unavoidable part of human existence (Müller & Davids, *Buddhist Suttas*, 162). With respect to *Anatta*, the Buddha has been quoted as saying there is "*no abiding principle in man*." In the July 1941 edition of *The Theosophical Forum*, Clarence Q. Wesner attempted to clarify what is meant by Buddha's statement:

"*Man is a composite entity, a hierarchy composed of many parts, or principles. Each of these principles is an entity, a being, living, functioning, evolving in (more or less) harmonious company with the other principle-entities which as an aggregate form the individual man. At 'death' the aggregate of principles is temporarily broken up. Each principle pursues its more or less independent evolution for a time. When the time comes for reincarnation of the man, the principles are again reintegrated, and man is born. Evolution - Motion - is Nature's basic characteristic, Nature's first Law. Every universe, every atom, every being or entity, which includes the various principles of man, is forever learning, experiencing, growing, unfolding the spiritual and divine powers and faculties within itself. No man, no principle in man, no atom of man's being "abides" for two consecutive instants of what we call time. Every instant provides experience, and the unfolding of a faculty or power to meet that experience. It is thus that we grow…*"[30]

Each person's spiritual journey or quest for self-realization is shaped by a complex array of factors, including their biology, personal history, generational lineage, and cultural heritage. The time and place in which they live, along with the conditioning they undergo throughout their life (unless made conscious), also play significant roles. Education, religious influences, and other experiences further contribute to this unique path. In Buddhism, the central aim of attaining liberation involves dissolving the illusion of a permanent, separate self. This is achieved through mastery over the will and intellect, as well as through a deep understanding of reality gained directly through practices such as meditation and contemplation. For additional information, see ***Appendix A: Fundamental Buddhist Beliefs*** and ***Appendix B: The Twelve Principles of Buddhism***.

Notes

[1] The Buddha that we are familiar with today, Siddhartha Gautama, is just one in a long line of Buddhas who has incarnated on our Earth from the beginning of time. See the *Buddhavamsa* of the *Khuddaka Nikaya* for additional information.
[2] Coomaraswamy & Horner, *The Living Thoughts of Gotama the Buddha*, 9.
[3] Retrieved from: https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/tathagata
[4] Chalmers, Robert. (1898). Tthagata. *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 01, 103-104.
[5] "*He had, like everyone else, undergone many births, had experienced the world as an animal, as a man, as a god. During his many rebirths, he would have shared the common fate of all that lives. A spiritual perfection like that of a Buddha cannot be the result of just one life*." – Conze, *Buddhism*, 35.
[6] Also known as Matron Gautami, Coomaraswamy, *Buddhism & The Gospel of Buddhism*, 16.
[7] Also referred to as Yasodhara (Arnold, *The Light of Asia*)
[8] Defined as: Hindrance, Coomaraswamy, *Buddhism & The Gospel of Buddhism*, 22.
[9] Coomaraswamy, *Buddha & The Gospel of Buddhism*, 23.
[10] *Ibid.*, 13.
[11] In Hermeticism and other occult traditions, this is referred to as the "Great Work."
[12] Lord of the five desires, bringer of death and enemy of truth (Carus, *The Gospel of the Buddha*, 36).
[13] Conze, *Gotama the Buddha*, 3.
[14] Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha*, 39-40.
[15] Conze, *Gotama the Buddha*, 4.
[16] Retrieved from: https://www.vridhamma.org/What-is-Dhamma
[17] Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha*, 41.
[18] The extinguishing or blowing out of the fires of greed, hatred and ignorance
[19] Davids. *Early Buddhism*. 39.
[20] Gogerly, Rev. D.J. (1865). The First Discourse Delivered by Buddha. *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* Vol. 4, 119.
[21] Conze, *Buddhism: its essence and development*, 11.
[22] Muller & Davids, The Buddhist Suttas, xxiii.
[23] Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, 1-2.
[24] Conze, *A Short History of Buddhism*, 26.
[25] Conze, *Buddhism*, 28
[26] *Ibid.*, 14
[27] Humphreys, *Buddhism,* 87.
[28] *Ibid.,* 87-88.
[29] *Ibid.,* 20.
[30] Retrieved from: https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/forum/f19n01p33_there-is-no-abiding-principle-in-man.htm

Part Three: Buddha's First Sermon

The Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness

Numerous translations of the Buddha's first discourse exist, each reflecting the perspectives of different schools of thought and the translators' interpretations. The *Dhamma-Kakka-Ppavattana-Sutta* is widely recognized as the Buddha's inaugural teaching, delivered to his five disciples in Sarnath just outside of Benares. While the core message regarding sorrow and its cessation has remained largely consistent, subtle variations in word meanings present a rich opportunity for contemplation for serious students seeking to grasp the Buddha's original intent and apply it to their own lives. *Dhamma-Kakka-Ppavattana-Sutta* has been translated as "The Setting in Motion of the Wheel of Dharma," "Promulgation of the Law," "The First Turning of the Wheel," and "The Four Noble Truths Sutra." However, T.W. Rhys Davids notes:

"*The name given to it [the first sermon] by the early Buddhists - the setting in motion onwards of the royal chariot-wheel of the supreme dominion of the Dhamma - means… not 'the turning of the wheel of the law,' as it has been usually rendered; but 'the inauguration, or foundation, of the Kingdom of Righteousness.'*"[1]

Davids argues that the Pāli word "*cakka*," typically translated as "wheel," does not adequately help to convey the original meaning of the discourse's title. He emphasizes the need to consider how the individual components of the title relate to one another, especially when taking into account their Sanskrit counterparts and the implications of those translations. Both the Pāli and Sanskrit words from the time of the Buddha are categorized as *Apabhramsa*, which refers to the languages spoken in North India that preceded modern Indian written languages. This historical context adds to the challenges of accurately de-coding these words today to understand and preserve their original intention. Per Davids:

"*The 'cakra' (Pāli cakka) is no ordinary wheel; it is the sign of dominion; and a 'cakravarti' is 'he who makes the wheels of his chariot roll unopposed over all the world' – a universal monarch. Dharma (Pāli Dhamma) is not law, but that which underlies and includes the law, - a word often most difficult to translate, and best rendered here by truth or righteousness; whereas the word 'law' suggests ceremonial observances, outward rules, which it was precisely the object of Gautam's teaching to do away with. Pravartana (Pāli ppavattana) is 'setting in motion onwards,' the commencement of an action which is to continue. The whole phrase means, therefore, 'To set rolling the royal chariot-wheel of a universal empire of truth and righteousness…'*"[2]

Davids also clarifies that Buddha did not attempt to teach the origins of the universe. Rather, Buddha assumed existence to be a rolling circle of various causes and effects which is the origin of the circle or wheel of law (Müller & Davids, *Buddhist Suttas*, 141).

Here, two sources were referenced concerning the actual sermon which represent the earliest known translations from Pāli to English by prominent scholars. One translation referenced was published in 1845 in the *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* by D. J.

Gogerly (1792-1862), a British Methodist missionary and scholar who provided one of the earliest known translations of the Buddha's First Sermon. Both the Pāli original and English translation were archived in Gogerly's handwriting.[3] Another translation was performed by Max Müller (1823-1900), a German Orientalist and professor at Oxford, and T.W. Rhys Davids (1843-1922), an English scholar and founder of the Pāli Text Society, in 1880 from a manuscript known as the Ceylon MS.[4] The translators note that the actual author of this text is unknown. The collection, bought from a bookseller in 1839 and now housed in the British Museum, contains hand-engraved silver plates containing the text from the *Anguttara Nikaya*. Müller & Davids agree that this Sutta is of the utmost historical significance since there has been little doubt over the years that its content is accurate. The Sutta provides a concise "*doctrine of salvation to be found here, in this life, in an inward change of heart, to be brought about by perseverance in a mere system of self-culture and self-control.*"[5] The system of self-culture and self-control the Buddha is referring to has been known as the Noble Path (Müller & Davids, 1881) and as the Aryan[6] Path (Davids, 1908). Self-culture refers to *Sikkhā* which translates as the "training" required of Buddha's disciples (Müller & Davids, *Buddhist Scriptures*, 224).

The Four Noble Truths

The Four Noble Truths represent the essence of Buddha's doctrine. An understanding of these truths lay a solid foundation for the understanding of the Noble Eightfold Path that follows. According to Buddha, if one can awaken to these truths and permeate them within one's own life, the cravings and desires of the self will dissolve and there will be no more becoming and therefore no additional rebirth (Humphreys, *The Wisdom of Buddhism*, 70). Sir Edwin Arnold who wrote *The Light of Asia* included the following:

"*Whatever, monks, is the destruction of passion, the destruction of hatred, the destruction of delusion, this is called the Deathless. This ariyan eightfold Way itself is the Way leading to the Deathless, that is to say right view, right concept, right speech, right acting, right mode of living, right exertion, right mindfulness, right contemplation.*" S. v. 8

At the onset of the Sermon, the Buddha began by warning his disciples of the futility of the two extremes which hinder one's journey to ultimate truth. The first extreme involves passionately pursuing sensory pleasures and engaging in self-indulgence, hedonism, and self-centeredness, often at the expense of others. This mindset prioritizes a relentless thirst for pleasurable experiences and the avoidance of pain. The opposite extreme encompasses a life of abstaining from all sensory pleasures, including practices like severe fasting, renouncing worldly possessions, extreme self-denial, and strict austerity. The Buddha considered this second extreme to be painful and useless as well. Further, he advised that no amount of austerities could purify a seeker trapped in delusional thinking (Carus, *The Gospel of the Buddha*, 49). He then stated: "*The Tathāgata, avoiding both these extremes, has discovered a middle path, leading to mental vision, understanding, self-control, wisdom, perfect knowledge, and the extinction of sorrow.*"[7] The middle path that the Buddha described was the system he discovered through direct experience, capable of leading anyone who earnestly pursued it to the same outcomes, with enlightenment as their primary aim. The Buddha described this middle path as such:

"*What is that middle path, O Bhikkhus, avoiding these two extremes, discovered by the Tathāgata – that path which opens the eyes, and bestows understanding, which leads to peace of mind, to the higher wisdom, to full enlightenment, to Nirvana? Verily! It is this noble eightfold path; that is to say: Right views; Right aspirations; Right conduct; Right livelihood; Right effort; Right mindfulness; and Right contemplation.*

This, O Bhikkhus, is that middle path, avoiding these two extremes, discovered by the Tathāgata – that path which opens the eyes, and bestows understanding, which leads to peace of mind, to the higher wisdom, to full enlightenment, to Nirvana!"[8]

Following his description of the two extremes and the path to liberation, the Buddha introduced the four noble truths to his disciples. The first noble truth expounds on the reality of suffering. It explains that suffering is inherent in all aspects of all human life, inescapable and connected with every mode of existence. The Pāli word used in the sermon is *dukkha* which has primarily been translated as suffering and alternately translated as sorrow, ill, and even more recently, stress.

"*Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning suffering. Birth is attended with pain (or is painful), decay is painful, disease is painful, death is painful. Union with the unpleasant is painful, painful is separation from the pleasant; and any craving that is unsatisfied, that too is painful. In brief, the five aggregates which spring from attachment (the conditions of individuality and their cause) are painful.*"[9]

The second truth expounds on the origin and cause of suffering. According to Buddha, birth is the basis of all misfortunes (Conze, 1951). Davids noted that the constant striving towards fulfillment of the wants of the lower self (our images of self and others created by thought), the conditions of our individuality, as well as our distorted view of the self all contribute to personal suffering (Müller & Davids, 1881).

"*It is the desire for what belongs to the unreal self that generates suffering, for it is impermanent, changeable, perishable, and that, in the object of desire, causes disappointment, disillusionment, and other forms of suffering to him who desires. Desire in itself is not evil. It is desire to affirm the lower self, to live in it, to cling to it, identify oneself with it, instead of with the Universal self, that is evil.*"[10] [11]

Buddha concluded that birth, illness, old age and finally, death, all inevitably lead to suffering. Additionally, we experience psychological suffering due to conflict, disappointment, grief and loss, attachments to transitory people, places and things, any form of irritation, any unsatisfied desire, disharmony, unmet cravings for prosperity, power, attention, love, recognition, fame, etc. Primarily, it is our desire for a "better" life than the life we have been given which leads to rebirth according to Buddha.

"*Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the origin of suffering. Verily, it is that thirst (or craving), causing the renewal of existence, accompanied by sensual delight, seeking satisfaction now here, now there - that is to say, the craving for the gratification of the passions, or the craving for (a future) life, or the craving for success (in this present life).*"[12]

The Buddha preached that the cessation (or destruction) of suffering is the only way to end personal suffering and attain true freedom. The cessation of suffering lies in the ability to end the passions, cravings, and thirst that fuel unattainable and/or temporary desires that feed the desires of the lower self. This is the third truth.

"*Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the destruction of suffering. Verily, it is the destruction, in which no passion remains, of this very thirst; the laying aside of, the getting rid of, the being free from, the harbouring no longer of this thirst*."[13]

The third and fourth truths stand out however in that they prescribe a way of transmuting the inevitable outcomes of life through self-awareness and compassion.

"*The diagnosis of the Enlightened One proclaimed its cause [suffering] to be desire, the never-ending craving of the senses, the selfish grasping of the lower self, indifferent to the needs and claims of others; the thirst for sentient existence. But a cure for the disease has been discovered and a prescription given by the Buddha. If the first two truths seem pessimistic, the third and fourth are trumpet calls to those who 'travail and are heavy laden', for they proclaim the end of suffering by the elimination of its cause, desire, and this is accomplished by treading the Noble Eightfold Path.*"[14]

The remedy to end all suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path which is the fourth Noble Truth.

"*Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning the way which leads to the destruction of sorrow. Verily! it is this noble eightfold path; that is to say: Right views; Right aspirations; Right speech; Right conduct; Right livelihood; Right effort; Right mindfulness; and Right contemplation.*"[15]

The Noble Eightfold Path

"*Not I, not any one else can travel that road for you. You must travel it for yourself*."
- Walt Whitman

The Noble Eightfold Path, also referred to as the Middle Way, has been described as a guide, a set of instructions or precepts, a living spiritual tradition, a gradual process of purification, the manifestation of true insight and unwavering commitment to the spiritual life, etc. According to Buddhist scholar Christmas Humphreys, it is the Middle Way which holds the key to our liberation: "*…a way to be trodden by each and every Buddhist as he 'works out his own salvation with diligence' to the same Supreme Enlightenment*."[16] He also refers to it as "*the noblest course of spiritual training yet presented to man.*"[17] Gogerly referred to the four truths and the eight divisions of the Noble Eightfold Path as "*the most complete and irrefutable wisdom attainable in the universe.*"[18] This set of eight elements, divisions, or modes of living comprises a lifelong journey from ignorance to lucidity, from suffering to peace. Indeed, life often feels like a struggle when we remain unaware of the mind's workings and endless deceptions of the self. K rejected the notion that any specific path was necessary, which marks a key distinction between his teachings and that of Buddha. Yet, another perspective on the Noble Eightfold Path is to view it as the inevitable outcome of genuine introspection and insights gained through meditation and sincere contemplation.

Each of the eight divisions of the Middle Way begin with the prefix *Sammā* which has been translated as "right" (Müller & Davids, *Buddhist Suttas*, 143) and "correct" (Gogerly, *On Buddhism*, 23) and sometimes as "perfect" or "wise." There is no adequate word in the English language to properly convey the true meaning. Additionally, the Noble Eightfold Path is segregated into three parts, not distinguished by the Buddha himself but later by scholars. Those sections include wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline. Edward Conze commented that working through the Eightfold Path was the essence of life itself and only through living the precepts could one come to know truth. It is not sufficient to have an intellectual understanding of these concepts. They must be lived in order to be fully comprehended and truly embodied. They must be embraced as a way of life and not as a mere curiosity (Conze, *Buddhism*, 9-10).

The Noble Eightfold Path Early Translations: The Eight Divisions		
Original Pāli[19]	Gogerly[20]	Müller & Davids[21]
Panna: wisdom, insight, intelligence		
sammā-ditthi	Correct views (of truth): correct doctrines	Right views
sammā-sankappo	Correct thoughts: a clear perception (of their nature).	Right aims
Sila: morality, purity of action, Buddhist ethics		
sammā-vaca	Correct words: inflexible veracity	Right speech
sammā-kammanta	Correct conduct: purity of conduct	Right conduct
sammā-ajiva	Correct (mode of attaining a) livelihood: a sinless occupation	Right livelihood
Samādhi: concentration, states of meditative consciousness		
sammā-vayama	Correct efforts: perseverance in duty	Right effort
sammā-sati	Correct meditation: holy meditation	Right mindfulness
sammā-samadhi	Correct tranquility: mental tranquility	Right contemplation

Upon entering the path, the wheel of the *Dhamma* begins its mighty rotation. It's often said that the only "right" way to approach this path is simply to start and persist, regardless of the challenges that arise. Many writers, including Annie Besant, viewed the eight aspects of the path as a sequential journey, each step building upon the last. To stay steady on this journey, we must strive to be the calm center of the cyclone, guided by wisdom and compassion as challenges and obstacles will naturally present themselves. This means acknowledging the inevitable ups and downs of life including inevitable changes in circumstances while remaining alert to the roots of suffering: the pursuits of pleasure, power, security, and attachment, as well as the deceptions of self. Living the Middle Way can be likened to tending a garden. Weeds will inevitably emerge beyond our awareness, so it is our responsibility to care for our garden as diligently and as often as possible, keeping the weeds at bay while nourishing and pruning our plants as they grow stronger. Another powerful description of the Noble Eightfold Path comes from renowned Buddhist author, Jack Kornfield:

"*The Middle Way rests at the center of all things, the one great seat in the center of the world. On this seat the Buddha opened his eyes to see clearly and opened his heart to embrace all. Through this he completed the process of his enlightenment. He declared, 'I have seen what there is to be seen and known what there is to be known in order to free myself completely from all illusion and suffering.'…We need to take the one seat, as the Buddha did, and completely face what is true about this life. Make no mistake about this, it is not easy. It can take the courage of a lion or a lioness, especially when we are asked to sit with the depth of our pain or fear.*"[22]

Right Views

The first step of the Middle Way is Right Views. *Sammā-ditthi* has also been translated as Right Knowledge, Right Doctrine, Right Thought and Right Belief. According to Annie Besant, this first step on the path serves as the foundation for all other steps as it ultimately impacts one's thought, speech, and action. Our views must be free from superstition or delusion (Müller & Davids, *Buddhist Suttas*, 144). Gogerly referred to this as Right Doctrine meaning that one's views should align with the immutable truths and facts of the universe, the laws of nature which do not change and cannot be broken, specifically the basic principles at the heart of Buddha's teaching, the Four Noble Truths. Upon hearing the *Dhamma*, the adept commits to living in accordance with the doctrine as outlined by Buddha.

However, seeing oneself and the world with clarity rooted in the four noble truths is easier said than done. We do not see the world as it is; we see it through the lens of our perceptions and conditioning, through our unhealed traumas and wounds, through our psychic projections. This is what makes the first step so challenging. K said that to find truth, the whole movement and nature of thought must be understood. To this end, Right Views also pertains to how we "right size" ourselves and admit that we do not have all the answers and that we are perhaps not seeing things as they are; we see things as we are. At this step of the path, we are asked to become teachable, humble, and curious. We understand and accept suffering as an inevitable part of life yet do not burden ourselves with unnecessary suffering stemming from programs of shame, blame, guilt and all the mind-manufactured problems resulting from wrong thinking. The path demands that we develop compassion for ourselves and others. Besant reminds us that we alone are responsible for our spiritual evolution, that no one can save us from ourselves. According to Annie Besant, two universal laws are implied in Right Views: The law of cause and effect (i.e., karma) and the law of opposites which she felt could be summed up by the following four phrases:

"'*Let a man overcome anger by love; let him overcome hatred by kindness; let him overcome the greedy by liberality; the liar by truth.*'"[23]

In the words of Buddha, Right Views includes the knowledge of the existence of suffering, the knowledge of suffering's origin, knowledge that suffering can end, and the way leading to the end of suffering. From the Buddhist perspective, Right Views must be informed by one's understanding of what constitutes wholesome and unwholesome thoughts, speech, action, etc. Buddha taught that all forms of greed, hatred, delusion, and the belief in a separate self constitutes the unwholesome. Alternately, compassion, wisdom, empathy, cooperation, self-

extinction, etc., constitute the wholesome. True wisdom lies in one's ability to differentiate for oneself that which is wholesome and that which is unwholesome.

Right Aims

Sammā-sankappo relates to will, volition, determination, and/or unselfish desire - the exertion of will in life's various pursuits, driven by the belief that a particular outcome is desirable or wholesome. The nuance in meaning sometimes emphasizes the desire that triggers this action. In this context, "aims" or "aspirations" best capture the intended meaning as does "intentions." Right Aims in conjunction with Right Views lay the foundation for acting from compassion, loving kindness, and a place of non-harm. When we align our thoughts with higher purposes and guard against destructive desires and harmful thoughts, we are better equipped to meet life on life's terms and to achieve a greater ease of relating to ourselves, others, and life in general. Annie Besant shared the following:

"*Your thought makes your character. As you think to-day, so to-morrow, inevitably, you will act. The thought-forms that you leave behind you when death touches you, the tendencies that have grown out of your life, those will be re-embodied in your next incarnation, and thus out of your tendencies of this life will be created the lives of the future.*"[24]

Sometimes referred to as Right Resolve, this aspect of the Eightfold Path emphasizes a firm commitment to living with clear intention, focused on avoiding harm to others and not seeking pleasure, nor resisting or fleeing from what is perceived as painful or sorrowful. It involves cultivating a mindset of acceptance and awareness - attending to whatever arises in one's experience, whether it is the joy of a delicious meal, the beauty of a flower, the comfort of a friend's hug, or the discomfort of physical pain. The key is to avoid attachment, simply observing each moment as it comes and allowing it to naturally fade away without clinging or interference. In this way, one learns to remain grounded in the present, free from the pull of desire or aversion. Over time, this practice nurtures a deeper sense of equanimity, fostering peace amidst life's ever-changing circumstances.

Right Speech

Sammā-vaca means Right Words or Right Speech. It reminds one to always hold the intention to speak to others in a kind, open and truthful fashion. Our words are powerful and can inflict harm if not delivered with care and consideration. This step on the path also includes listening for if we are to respond to another in a way that is truthful and courteous, we must first hear what the other person is saying to us and not our interpretation of what is being said. In certain situations where the dialogue is perhaps tense, it is more appropriate to hold silence than to respond with hurtful words. If this is the case, the abuser will remain with the abusive words and the responder can move away knowing he or she has caused no further damage. Annie Besant shared the following antidote as an example of Right Speech:

"*A certain man was railing at him [Buddha], using wrong speech and not right; the Blessed One listened patiently until the man finished all the abuse that he had to pour upon Him, and then He answered gently and said: 'Son! When a man gives a present without regard to the rules of politeness,*

the fashion is to say: Keep your present. Son! I cannot take your railing. Keep it and take it back to yourself. The wicked man who attacks a virtuous one, is like a man who looks up to high heaven and spits at it. The heaven is not soiled thereby, but the spittle falls upon his own person and defiles him. The man who scatters mud does not soil others: on the contrary the mud flies and soils his own clothes. The virtuous man cannot be injured by the evil a wicked man does against him: the evil goes back to the wrong-doer.'"[25]

From a Buddhist perspective, Right Speech involves refraining from speech that is false, harmful, or malicious. It also means avoiding language that is harsh or unreasonable. To speak rightly is to communicate with truth, clarity, usefulness, and at the appropriate time. There are moments when it may be necessary to share information or feedback that others might not want to hear. However, if we can express ourselves honestly, with sincerity and compassion for the other person, it increases the likelihood that they will be able to listen and understand, even if the message is difficult or unwelcome. Right Speech is not just about the words we use, but the intention behind them - speaking in a way that fosters understanding, reduces conflict, and nurtures connection. By cultivating this mindful approach to communication, we can create an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, even in challenging conversations.

Finally, Right Speech also includes refraining from idle chatter - talking for the sake of talking without offering anything of value. Such unproductive speech often wastes time and energy, serving little practical purpose. At times, it can even be a way of avoiding more important or difficult conversations, especially when there is tension or conflict between people. Right Speech extends beyond external communication to our internal dialogue as well, which is often filled with thoughts that are neither helpful nor constructive. When we notice ourselves caught in a mental loop or unhelpful self-talk, we can bring awareness to that moment, gently interrupting the cycle, and return to a state of silent presence and mindful attention. This practice of awareness not only enhances the quality of our speech but also nurtures a quieter, more focused mind.

Right Conduct

Sammā-kammanta refers to action and behavior that is peaceful, honest, and pure. Right Conduct inspires one to live a life grounded in integrity and to avoid any behavior that could lead to self-harm or the harm of others. According to Annie Besant:

"*The tongue is the hardest thing to control. Have control over your mind and thoughts, have control over your mind and tongue; then Right Action will inevitably follow – the actions of the body will inevitably follow the right road.*"[26]

Sometimes referred to as Right Action, this division of the Eightfold Path emphasizes ethical conduct and moral integrity in all aspects of life. It includes refraining from causing harm to others, particularly through the destruction of life, whether through violence or neglect. This principle also extends to abstaining from taking anything that is not freely given - whether material possessions, resources, or personal freedoms - recognizing that stealing or deceit undermines trust and the interconnectedness of all beings. In addition, Right Conduct

involves refraining from sexual misconduct, understood in Buddhism as any sexual behavior that exploits, deceives, or causes harm to oneself or others. It also encompasses the responsibility to avoid actions that harm oneself, whether through reckless behavior, self-destructive habits, or neglect of one's own well-being. Practicing Right Conduct means living in a way that fosters respect, compassion, and mindfulness in our interactions, promoting peace and harmony both within ourselves and with others. It encourages us to act with integrity, to be conscious of the impact of our actions, and to cultivate a life that supports the well-being of all beings, including ourselves.

Right Livelihood

Sammā-ajiva, often translated as Right Livelihood or Right Occupation, addresses how we earn a living and engage with the world through our work. Buddha encouraged people to pursue occupations that not only supported their own material needs but also contributed positively to society and supported spiritual development. Right Livelihood involves engaging in work that benefits others, avoids exploitation, and does not cause harm to any living being. It encourages individuals to choose work that nurtures both personal growth and the welfare of the community, fulfilling unmet needs within the family, society, or beyond. In this way, one's livelihood becomes a source of purpose and meaning, aligning with both ethical principles and a broader sense of interconnectedness.

A key aspect of Right Livelihood is that it should never result in harm to others, whether through direct exploitation, environmental destruction, or any form of unethical business practice. Buddha taught that the fortune of one person should never come at the expense of another. If one gains wealth through means that cause harm or take advantage of others, the material wealth amassed may lead to greater suffering, even as one's bank account grows. Such wealth is shallow, as it erodes honor, integrity, and virtue, which are far more enduring. Furthermore, Right Livelihood includes the proper use of wealth - acknowledging that material resources should be used wisely, compassionately, and with a sense of responsibility. Wealth should be shared with generosity and used to uplift others, rather than hoarded or used for selfish indulgence. This includes supporting causes that alleviate suffering, helping those in need, and investing in practices that promote personal and collective well-being. Buddha's teachings remind us that true prosperity is not measured solely by the accumulation of material wealth, but by the richness of character, the cultivation of greater awareness, and the positive impact one has on the world. Ultimately, Right Livelihood is not just about the work we do, but the intention and ethical mindfulness we bring to it. It invites us to reflect on how our work, wealth, and the choices we make in our occupations contribute to our overall well-being and the well-being of others, creating a life that is both meaningful and driven by a sense of purpose.

Right Effort

Sammā-vayama, or Right Effort, pertains to the disciplined application of self-control and self-training in all aspects of our actions, thoughts, and intentions. It is the effort to cultivate and maintain mental and emotional states that are conducive to spiritual growth while letting go of those that hinder it. A key principle of Right Effort is striving for balance - avoiding both

over exertion and under exertion. Whether it is in physical activity, mental tasks, or emotional work, one must exert effort mindfully, without pushing oneself to extremes or remaining passive. The goal is to engage fully in the present moment, applying the right amount of energy to each task while also recognizing the importance of rest and recovery as part of the natural rhythm of life.

In this context, Right Effort is closely linked to wise exertion, or working in a balanced and thoughtful manner. It involves focusing our energy with mindfulness, and directing our efforts responsibly, recognizing that energy must be properly guided by wisdom. Effort must be informed by Right Views and Right Aims, as exertion without wisdom can lead to harm rather than benefit. Well-meaning actions without the proper understanding or intention can be more detrimental than inaction. As Buddha taught, the right path involves discerning where and how to apply our energy in a way that aligns with our highest values, not merely acting on impulse or desire.

"*It is not the effort itself which I blame," he [Buddha] said, "which casts aside the base and follows a higher path of its own: but the wise in sooth, by all this heavy toil, ought to attain to the state where nothing ever needs to be done again. And since it is the mind that controls the body, it is thought alone that should be restrained. Neither purity of food nor the waters of a sacred river can cleanse the heart: water is but water, but the true place of pilgrimage is the virtue of the virtuous man.*"[27]

At its core, Right Effort focuses specifically on an internal state of being, one that involves preventing and letting go of negative mental states while actively cultivating and maintaining positive ones. This is the polar opposite of the false positivity movement fostered by the New Age. It is about nurturing wholesome qualities such as compassion, generosity, and mindfulness, while eliminating unwholesome tendencies like greed, hatred, and delusion. Right Effort requires awareness of one's internal landscape - identifying and releasing harmful thoughts, emotions, and habits, while fostering positive qualities that support one's own well-being and the well-being of others. By working skillfully with both wholesome and unwholesome states of mind, we create an inner ecosystem that promotes peace, clarity, and insight, which naturally extends into our actions and interactions with the world.

Ultimately, Right Effort is about cultivating a harmonious and mindful approach to life, where every effort - whether in thought, speech, or action - is guided by wisdom and compassion. It represents a balance between striving for growth and surrendering to the present moment, between applying the necessary effort and understanding when to let go. In doing this, we create a life that is both purposeful and peaceful, rooted in a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

Right Mindfulness

Sammā-sati pertains to Right Mindfulness and is also sometimes referred to as Correct Meditation. Meditation requires an active watchful mind, being aware in each moment, paying close attention to our thoughts, emotions, and actions without judgement. It is important to be mindful of how we spend our time and to notice how sensations, thoughts, desires, etc. arise and fall away throughout the course of a day. Only an attentive mind is

capable of being able to perceive the "what is" within this perception-managed reality we find ourselves residing in. This seeing is not linked to time, accumulation of knowledge, or the result of any prescribed or disciplined practice.

"*Samma-sati; sati is literally 'memory,' but is used with reference to the constantly repeated phrase 'mindful and thoughtful' (sato sampagano); and means that the activity of mind and constant presence of mind which is one of the duties most frequently inculcated on the good Buddhist*."[28]

This aspect of the Eightfold Path is often referred to as Right Attention, Right Recollectedness, or Right Perception. It emphasizes cultivating awareness of one's internal state, making mindfulness a central practice for mental and emotional clarity. Mindfulness involves being fully present and accepting of both our inner and outer experiences - especially our thoughts, feelings, and sensory perceptions as they arise. It is not an abstract or mystical state, but a grounded, everyday awareness that can be integrated into daily life. Through mindfulness, we develop a mind that is both peaceful and relaxed, yet sharp and alert, allowing us to engage with the world more fully. It teaches us to remain present, regardless of whether our experiences are pleasant or unpleasant, fostering emotional balance and resilience. This non-judgmental attention to the present moment helps deepen our self-awareness and self-understanding.

In the Buddhist tradition, mindfulness is not simply about paying attention in a general sense; it is a profound, intentional practice of being present and aware of one's thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, and surroundings in a non-judgmental and accepting way. This practice is closely linked to the Pāli concept of *vipassanā,* which means "insight" or "clear seeing." Vipassanā meditation is one of the central forms of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism and is often referred to as "insight meditation." It involves cultivating a deep awareness of the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and interconnected nature of all phenomena.

Through the practice of mindfulness, one develops the ability to observe the arising and passing away of thoughts, feelings, and sensations without becoming attached to them or reacting with aversion or craving. This non-reactive awareness allows one to see the true nature of experience more clearly, as it is, without the distortion of personal biases or habitual patterns of thought and mind loops. By sustaining mindfulness over time, one can begin to realize that all phenomena are impermanent, that suffering arises from attachment and clinging, and that there is no permanent self or "I" at the core of our human experience. The cultivation of mindfulness in this way may lead to deeper insight, which would enable one to directly perceive the nature of suffering and its end.

Right Contemplation

Sammā-samadhi, often translated as Right Concentration, refers to a state of deep and unwavering mental focus that is one of the key divisions of the Noble Eightfold Path. It signifies a level of meditation where the mind becomes still, clear, and unified, free from distractions, allowing one to gain deep insight and wisdom. This concentration is not just about focusing intently on an object or thought, but about achieving a profound level of mental clarity, calmness, and equanimity within one's inner being. In this state, it can become

possible to see beyond the surface level of experiences and perceptions, cutting through the illusions, projections, and distractions of the mind to reach a direct awareness of reality. Sammā-samadhi has various translations and interpretations. It can be defined as Right Contemplation, emphasizing the deliberate and mindful focus on the profound truths of life - such as the impermanent nature of all things, the interconnectedness of all phenomena, and the nature of suffering. It can also be described as a state of rapture, tranquility, and bliss, as one enters into the deeper meditative states known as the *jhānas*, or absorptions. These states are marked by progressively deeper levels of concentration, where the mind becomes increasingly absorbed in the object of meditation, and worldly distractions fade into the background. Additionally, it can be understood as concentration without effort, where the mind naturally becomes still without forceful striving. This clarified concentration arises from training, discipline, and a gradual purification of the mind through continuous practice. It is not an intense mental exertion, but a state of effortless absorption, where the mind is at ease and fully immersed in the present moment.

Achieving Right Contemplation is not simply a matter of retreating into a quiet, controlled environment for meditation. Instead, it begins with the way one lives in the world and the way one engages with daily activities. The process of cultivating Right Contemplation requires training the mind to focus on the task at hand, regardless of what that task might be. Whether folding the laundry, walking the dog, or celebrating with friends, it is vital to direct one's attention fully to the present moment, to do each thing with complete care and attention, and to avoid letting the mind wander aimlessly or become distracted by external stimuli.

"*But for the man of the world, the road to Right Concentration is training your mind in ordinary life. Practise it day by day, hour by hour, by fixing your whole attention on the thing you are doing, and do that thing as perfectly as it is possible for you to do it. Do not let your mind wander, do not let it drift. Keep it under your own control, rule it well and firmly. You will not be able at first to close your mind to the distractions, and the disturbances around you, until you have practised that concentration for many years. Then your mind will become obedient to your will. If you do that, you may begin to meditate with some success. Then the mind which has been trained to concentrate upon outer objects, will become obedient when you begin to fix it upon lofty principles of life*."[29]

The development of the mind is not simply about becoming more focused in meditation but about transforming how one engages with all aspects of life. A mind cultivated in Right Contemplation becomes a powerful instrument for understanding the deeper truths of existence, the meaning and purpose of life. In this process, one moves closer to the ultimate goal of liberation - freedom from suffering and the attainment of wisdom and peace. This gradual journey is both a path of personal transformation and a way to embody the teachings of Buddha in everyday life.

Notes

[1] Müller & Davids, *Buddhist Suttas*, 140.
[2] Davids, T. W. Rhys, *Buddhism*, 45.
[3] Gogerly, Rev. D.J. (1865). The First Discourse Delivered by Buddha. *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* Vol. 4, 119.
[4] Originated from Ceylon, Sri Lanka
[5] Müller & Davids, *Buddhist Suttas*, 143.
[6] From the Vedas, meaning Aryan race and/or gentle, noble, kindly (Davids, *Early Buddhism*, 1908).
[7] Gogerly, Rev. D.J. (1845). On Buddhism. *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* Vol. 1, 23.
[8] Müller & Davids, *Buddhist Suttas*, 147-148.
[9] *Ibid.*, 148.
[10] Humphreys, *Buddhism,* 91-92.
[11] Originally attributed to Edmond Holmes, *The Creed of the Buddha*, p. 68.
[12] Müller & Davids, *Buddhist Suttas*, 148.
[13] *Ibid.*, 149.
[14] Humphreys, *Buddhism,* 90.
[15] Müller & Davids, *Buddhist Suttas*, 149-150.
[16] Humphreys, *The Wisdom of Buddhism*, 7.
[17] Humphreys, *Buddhism*, 22.
[18] Gogerly, Rev. D.J. (1865). The First Discourse Delivered By Buddha. *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* Vol. 4, 121.
[19] Retrieved from: https://encyclopediaofbuddhism.org/wiki/Noble_Eightfold_Path
[20] Gogerly, Rev. D.J. (1865). The First Discourse Delivered By Buddha. *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* Vol. 4, 121.
[21] Müller & Davids, *Buddhist Suttas*, 144.
[22] Kornfield, *A Path with Heart*, 35.
[23] Besant, *Adyar Pamphlets No. 192, The Noble Eightfold Path*, 7-8.
[24] *Ibid.*, 9-10.
[25] *Ibid.*, 10-11.
[26] *Ibid.*, 12.
[27] Coomaraswamy, *Buddhism & The Gospel of Buddhism*, 28.
[28] Müller & Davids, *Buddhist Suttas*, 145.
[29] Besant, *Adyar Pamphlets No. 192, The Noble Eightfold Path*, 18.

Part Four: Jiddu Krishnamurti & Theosophy

K's Early Life

Unlike Gautama, K[1] was born in a small hill town known as Madanpalle in South India on May 11, 1895. He was the eighth of eleven children. As was the tradition of the time, K's astrology birth chart was cast shortly after his birth and he was predicted to be a very great and important man (Luytens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening*, 2.). K's father, Jiddu Narayanaiah, held a respectable government job which required him to move his family on several occasions creating a certain hardship for the family. At the age of two, K survived a serious bout of malaria which continued to afflict him over the course of many years. Only six of K's siblings survived childhood and in 1905, at the age of ten, K lost his beloved mother, Sanjeevamma, a devout Hindu. Until her death, K, who was sick at home with fever on most days, would sit with his mother in her home *puja* room[2] while she performed her traditional Brahmin ceremonies, singing praises to her beloved deities.

Over the course of K's childhood, he struggled in school, did not adapt to the common learning style involving reading, recitation, memorization, etc., and was considered to have learning disabilities and/or perhaps be mentally disabled. He was severely reprimanded and beaten by schoolteachers as well as at home by his father. K daydreamed often in class and was routinely punished for it. I remember reading one story while at the Rajghat Study Center that told of an incident where K had been kept after school as a punishment. He was given an assignment and left alone in the classroom to complete his task. The teacher had forgotten about K and went home for the day. In the evening time, when K had not returned home to his family, his concerned family members went in search of him and found him sitting at his desk waiting to receive instruction that he could leave. Although I do not remember the source of this story, it remained in my memory as evidence of how K was described as having "no will of his own."

K was known to be excessively generous with the local beggars as well as sympathetic towards his classmates who had fewer resources than him. He often returned home at the end of the school day with no books, pencils, etc. having given them to the poorer children in the school (Luytens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening*, 4). K was also described as a "dreamy" child with uncanny psychic abilities who had visions of his mother after her death. When needed and his interest aroused, he could focus his attention and complete complex tasks. He spent much of his free time in nature. "*He would stand for long stretches at a time watching trees and clouds, or squat on the ground gazing at plants and insects.*"[3] Much like Buddha, K's fascination, observation, and appreciation of the natural world persisted throughout his life.

By the end of 1907 K's father, Jiddu Narayanaiah, an orthodox Brahmin and widower, had retired from his government job with a pension barely enough to meet the needs of his remaining family. As he was also a Theosophist (from 1881 onwards), Narayanaiah pleaded by writing to the new president of the Theosophical Society (TS) International Headquarters in Adyar, Chennai, Annie Besant, and was able, after several attempts, to secure an administrative job with the TS. As part of the agreement, Narayanaiah was awarded free

housing in a nearby rundown cottage with no indoor plumbing just outside the estate of the TS. The family endured enormous hardship and Narayanaiah struggled with making ends meet during this time. K's life, however, was about to change course completely in the coming years.

Theosophy & The World Teacher

One of K's biographers, Mary Lutyens, was three years old when her mother embraced the ideologies of the TS and Mary was consequently raised within the tenets of the TS. "*Instead of saying 'Our Father which art in heaven…' I was taught to recite every morning: 'I am a link in the golden chain that stretches round the world and I promise to keep my link bright and strong.*'"[4] Mary had met K early in life due to her affiliation with the TS and his longstanding friendship with her mother, Lady Emily Luytens. They remained friends until his death in 1986. She penned a total of seven biographical books related to K's life and his incredible spiritual journey.

Based on the spiritual philosophy of Theosophy, The TS was founded in 1875 in New York City by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky commonly referred to as H.P.B. (1831-1891) and Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907). Shortly thereafter, the two occultists traveled to South India and founded the Theosophical Society International Headquarters in Adyar, near Chennai, India. The TS was established as a synthesis of Eastern and Western religions, incorporating esoteric and mystical teachings from occult mystery schools as well as Universal Law. Theosophy, however, was not founded as a religion. Rather, H.P.B. described it as a Divine Knowledge (such as possessed by gods) or Science inspired by "Theosophia" meaning "wisdom of the gods" and "Theogonia" meaning "genealogy of the gods;" the name Theosophy dates back to the third century, specifically to the Eclectic Theosophical system as well as pre-Vedic Buddhism (Blavatsky, 1889).

One of the main foundational beliefs of the TS as outlined in H.P.B.'s *The Secret Doctrine, The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy*, is the idea that the human evolutionary journey is just a part of an even greater cosmic evolution. The TS aimed at spreading great moral truths amongst its followers establishing the motto: "*There is no religion higher than truth*." H.P.B. claimed to be in contact with unseen "hidden" astral forces who guided her journey which she referred to as "The Masters." The four main principles of Theosophy include (Blavatsky, 1889):

1. Universal Brotherhood: The belief in the unity of all humanity and the importance of compassion and ethical living.
2. Exploration of Spiritual Truths: Encouraging study and personal experience to uncover deeper spiritual realities.
3. Reincarnation and Karma: Concepts that suggest a cyclical view of life based on the Universal Law of cause and effect.
4. Hidden Wisdom: The idea that ancient wisdom and knowledge exist, often obscured by conventional beliefs.

In 1889, H.P.B. predicted the arrival of a "World Teacher" based on her communications with The Masters. She revealed that one of the main purposes in founding the TS was to prepare humanity for the emergence of an advanced spiritual presence in human form. This presence was thought to be the Lord Maitreya, who has been known to assist humanity during

critical moments and help elevate our collective consciousness and evolution. In all schools of Buddhism, Maitreya is recognized as the future Buddha of our world. The Theosophists felt K would be an ideal candidate as the physical vessel for this entity to take physical form in the world of the early 1900's to facilitate a global awakening.

The TS was responsible in many ways for raising awareness of Buddhism in the West during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many Western scholars responsible for translating early Buddhist scriptures were in some way affiliated with the TS. Both H.P.B. and Henry Steel Olcott took initiation into Theravāda Buddhism in 1880. Olcott, in conversation with The Masters was quoted as saying Buddhism, stripped of its superstitions, is the Eternal Truth itself (Anonymous, 1925). H.P.B. and Olcott's predecessors were Dr. Annie Besant (1847-1933) and C.W. Leadbeater (1854-1934). Besant, who had met H.B.P. in 1890, pursued studies in Theosophy and began giving public talks as well as authoring several books on various esoteric and occult subjects, including Esoteric Buddhism, via her affiliation with the TS. In the February 1907 edition of the Theosophist magazine, Besant shared her thoughts on the Universal Brotherhood as part of her campaign for the presidency of the TS:

"*This is a Universal Brotherhood and is founded on a spiritual unity; Spirit is inclusive, all-embracing, and a Universal Brotherhood founded on the Spirit can exclude none; hence no one should be expelled from the Theosophical Society… The Universal Brotherhood is a fact in nature, beyond our creating or our destroying; the purest saint and the vilest criminal are brothers in fact, in truth. Nor would there be any sense or object in making a 'Society' which should be co-extensive with humanity*."[5]

C.W. Leadbeater, amongst others, was anticipating the return of the World Teacher. In 1909 he discovered the young K along with a group of other children playing in the water at the beach at Adyar. Leadbeater immediately recognized something different in K and noted that K had the most wonderful aura he had ever seen - devoid of any sign of selfishness. He arranged to meet K and the boy was brought to Leadbeater's home where he begun to explore K's past lives by placing his hand on top of the boy's head. At that time, K was severely malnourished, infested with lice and covered with mosquito bites according to Mary Lutyens in *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti*. Leadbeater went on to report that K, known as Alcyone in past lives, would be an appropriate "vehicle" for the coming World Teacher and the process of K's grooming commenced. Annie Besant, the new president of the TS, would eventually win guardianship and eventually custody of K and his brother, Nitya, and the boys would travel abroad to be educated and initiated within the ranks of European high society (Lutyens, 1995). In this sense, K shifted from a childhood of extreme poverty into an adolescence and early adulthood lavish with riches. From an interview with K:

"*He was taken to Europe, lived with people, so-called British aristocracy, butlers, yachts, clothes, servants, Rolls-Royces. He never smoked, never drank. Girls used to come around him and he didn't know what it was all about. And so there was this peculiar state of mind which could not be held in a pattern. And they had put him at the head of an organization, "Order of the Star in the East", where he was literally worshiped. And he used to shrink from all that. He was vague. He would tell everybody: "I'll do whatever you want." That used to be his favorite phrase. "I'll do what you want." Even now sometimes it happens."*[6]

The TS established the Order of the Star in the East (OSE) in 1911 with K as its head to prepare the world at large for the return of the World Teacher. K initially embraced this role and began conducting public talks and traveling throughout the world. In 1922, K experienced a series of inner spiritual transformations which served to revolutionize his thinking and perspectives on life in general as well his role as a humanitarian teacher; this included his experience of awakening under a pepper tree in Ojai, California. K and his younger brother, Nitya, shared a unique and deeply loving bond and by 1925, Nitya's health was rapidly declining due to a diagnosis of tuberculosis. K and Nitya had relocated to Ojai in the hopes that the climate there could serve as a relief from Nitya's symptoms. While in Ojai, the brothers, on their own for the first time, began to experience life outside of the supervision of the TS. Nitya's unexpected death was a shock to K who had been assured by Besant and other members of the TS that Nitya would survive. K, on board an ocean liner headed to Europe and miles away from Ojai, was plunged into darkness and despair over the news of his brother's death. This pivotal experience prompted K to look inward for guidance instead of putting his trust in the empty promises of the TS and their associates. Reflecting upon Nitya's passing, K shared the following:

"*A new strength born of suffering is pulsating in the veins, and a new sympathy and understanding are being born out of past suffering. I know now, with greater certainty than ever before, that there is real beauty in life, real happiness that cannot be shattered by any physical happening, and a great love which is permanent, imperishable and unconquerable*."[7]

Past Lives

Both K and Buddha are said to have experienced many past incarnations as spiritual seekers and perhaps as Bodhisattvas. They may have known each other in some of those lifetimes. This connection may explain the deep affinity and warmth K exhibited whenever he spoke of Buddha. Shortly after K was discovered on a beach in Adyar, C.W. Leadbeater began exploring the akashic records - by means that remain unclear - to document K's previous lives under the name of Alcyone. This research culminated in the two-volume work *Lives of Alcyone*, authored by Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater, which chronicled forty-eight of K's past lives from 70,000 B.C. to A.D. 624. The findings were published in a series of articles in *The Theosophist* magazine starting in 1910. In lifetime after lifetime, through the various stories shared, it was clear that Alcyone appeared to be a Bodhisattva in training. Of his forty-eight incarnations, Alcyone met Gautama Buddha during his forty-seventh incarnation in approximately A.D. 588.

Over the course of this "past life," ongoing turbulent family drama concluded with the death of Alcyone's son by slow poisoning at the hand of his cousin's wife who hoped her own son could be the next family heir. Inconsolable and stricken by grief, Alcyone attended a sermon preached by Lord Buddha who spoke about sorrow and karma. Alcyone was momentarily relieved of his deep sadness. He continued to sit in audience with Buddha to receive his timeless teachings which were a salve to Alcyone's profoundly aching heart. Alcyone ultimately reconciled with his cousin's family who had been cast out of the family home and invited them back eager to share the teachings of Buddha with them as well. Eventually, and with the blessings of his entire family, Alcyone committed to the spiritual life, to follow

Buddha and live the *Dhamma*.

Turmoil in the Theosophical Society

As early as 1900, fears had already arisen that satanic underpinnings were woven into the foundation of the TS and that those secret teachings were reserved for the highest-level initiates of the organization.

"*Thus, even if our worst surmises be true, the Theosophists with whom we have to deal have probably received only the philosophy which surrounds and conceals the Satanic propaganda, and know nothing of what may be its ultimate aim, to substitute another deity for the Great Creator.*"[8]

Additionally, there were growing concerns that Theosophy was a vehicle attempting to re-establish the philosophy of the Nephilim.[1] [9] In 1910, Annie Besant publicly reiterated H.P.B.'s concerns that the TS should not evolve into a sect or sects. Freedom of thought and speech should be exercised at all costs; being truthful in all matters, essential. A warning was also issued – that the "fire" would challenge every person's work eventually and that only the false could be burned away (Besant, *Basis of the Theosophical Society*, 10-11).

Not long after H.P.B.'s death, the organization naturally went through its own growing pains resulting in power struggles within the organization, organizational changes, and negative public relations. In 1906, just before the discovery of the young K, C.W. Leadbeater was under scrutiny related to reports that he was encouraging masturbation amongst some of the young boys he had been tutoring. This incident led to a separation between the various TS locations across the world. Although Leadbeater had resigned from the TS prior to his legal proceedings, he was eventually re-admitted to the TS once Annie Besant secured her role as president of the organization (Luytens, 2003). The upheavals within the TS continued. In 1922, B.P Wadia, a member of the TS General Council in India, resigned from his post citing his concerns around the abandonment of the original founding principles and the evolution of hierarchy within the organization:

"*I have come to the conclusion that the T.S. has strayed away from the 'Original Programme' inspired by the 'Original Impulses' whereby the Masters brought it into existence through the help of Their Messenger, H.P. Blavatsky. It is no more a Society of seekers of the Wisdom, but an organization where many believe in the few, and blind following has come to prevail; where shams pass for realities, and the credulity of superstition gains encouragement; and where the noble ideals of Theosophical Ethics are exploited and dragged in the mire of psychism and immorality. Theosophy through H.P.B. has ceased to be a serious subject of persistent study, and that which has taken its place has little resemblance to the original virile, healthy, and profound teachings. The T.S. as it exists today is disloyal to Theosophy and its Holy Cause, and I regard that those who remain loyal to Theosophy can not be loyal to the T.S.*

I have earnestly and honestly endeavored to bring the above fact to the notice of the members by the only straightforward course of preaching the Truth as H.P.B. taught it. Time, energy and money spent

[1] The word Nephilim is found in the Bible, in Genesis 6:1-6 and then again in Numbers 13:33. Scholars and commentators translate the word Nephilim as giants or fallen ones.

in the T.S. have brought the further knowledge that the existing conditions in the T.S. are so deep rooted and so wide spread that the disease is incurable. The T.S., as feared by H.P.B., has drifted on a sandbank and is, spiritually speaking, a dead body."[10]

To this day, Theosophists continue to fight for the reputation of the TS claiming its foundation was laid with intentions of benevolence and the highest good of mankind in mind while dissenting voices continue to accuse the organization of being involved in nefarious activities such as sorcery, demon worship, and necromancy. More recently, the TS has been recognized for laying the groundwork for the now popular New Age movement: "*No single organization or movement has contributed so many components to the New Age Movement as the Theosophical Society… It has been the major force in the dissemination of occult literature in the West in the twentieth century*."[11]

Truth is a Pathless Land

After K's profound spiritual experience following the death of his brother, at the age of thirty-four, he made a bold move in distancing himself from the TS. On August 3, 1929, the opening day of the Star Camp in Ommen, Holland, K publicly dissolved the OSE and stepped down from his role as the World Teacher. To an audience of 3,000 members, including Annie Besant, he delivered his famous, heartfelt speech, "Truth is a Pathless Land." The following in an excerpt from that speech:

"*I maintain that Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect. That is my point of view, and I adhere to that absolutely and unconditionally. Truth, being limitless, unconditioned, unapproachable by any path whatsoever, cannot be organized; nor should any organization be formed to lead or to coerce people along any particular path. If you first understand that, then you will see how impossible it is to organize a belief. A belief is purely an individual matter, and you cannot and must not organize it. If you do, it becomes dead, crystallized; it becomes a creed, a sect, a religion, to be imposed on others. This is what everyone throughout the world is attempting to do. Truth is narrowed down and made a plaything for those who are weak, for those who are only momentarily discontented. Truth cannot be brought down, rather the individual must make the effort to ascend to it. You cannot bring the mountain-top to the valley. If you would attain to the mountain-top you must pass through the valley, climb the steeps, unafraid of the dangerous precipices.*"[12]

During that speech, he confidently expressed his vision: to make humanity wholly free and to serve as a steward for its awakening. He emphasized the importance of doing this without the constraints of organizations, rules, or directives. He believed that this approach would help people recognize their true nature and foster their growth as free individuals. "*The single object of his teaching was to set men free from all the cages which divide man from man, such as race, religion, nationality, class and tradition, and thereby bring about a transformation in the human psyche*."[13] Later, in the February 1931 edition of the International Star Bulletin (ISB), K further went on to say: "*I am not an oracle to solve all problems. I want to make people think for themselves. I want them to question the very things which they hold most dear and precious, so that after they have invited doubt only that which is of eternal value will remain*."[14]

Although K distanced himself from the TS, he maintained friendly relations with individual members of the Society. He continued to correspond with Annie Besant, affectionately calling her "Mother" up until her death in 1933. K spent the remainder of his life traveling the world as an independent speaker, gaining recognition as an original thinker on spiritual, philosophical, and psychological topics. Even in his final days, K remained acutely aware of the presence of suffering (Luytens, *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti*, 161). He passed away just after midnight on February 17, 1986, from pancreatic cancer.

Notes

[1] The full history of K's life has been well-documented by biographers, Mary Lutyens and Pupul Jayakar. Both authors knew Krishnamurti personally and actively participated in both his private and public life. Consult the References section for a list of works by both authors.
[2] A room in traditional Hindu households dedicated to devotional homage and prayer to one or more deities.
[3] Luytens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening*. (2003), 4.
[4] Luytens, *Krishnamurti: His Life and Death*, xii.
[5] Besant, *Basis of the Theosophical Society*, 2.
[6] Retrieved from: https://thelifeofkrishnamurti.kfa.org/timelines/timeline-1915-1924/
[7] Retrieved from: https://kfoundation.org/krishnamurti-biography/
[8] Pember, *Theosophy, Buddhism and the Signs of the End*, 4.
[9] Retrieved from https://www.christianity.com/wiki/angels-and-demons/who-were-the-nephilim-in-the-bible.html#google_vignette
[10] Wadia. 1922. [Resignation Letter from B.P. Wadia, General Council Member of the Theosophical Society, to Fellow Theosophists and Members of the Theosophical Society].
[11] Melton, *New Age Encyclopedia*, 458.
[12] Lutyens, *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti*, 65.
[13] *Ibid.*, xiv.
[14] Krishnamurti, J. (1931, February). Life's Problems: Some Questions and Answers. *ISB*, Vol. 2, 4.

Part Five: Parallels between Buddha & Krishnamurti

Over the years, numerous authors and scholars have sought to compare K's teachings with those of Buddha. Even though the two lived in very different eras, they share some notable similarities that align towards the actualization of a life of freedom, beyond suffering. Generally speaking, both men had the ability to captivate the attention of small and large audiences with their very presence. Like Buddha, K also went on to reject the material world which seemed to provide little value on the spiritual path. Both men rejected the caste system and did not promote the worship of deities, or the practice of rituals commonly embraced in Hinduism. Most importantly, they both continued to speak and teach over the course of their respective lifetimes regardless of the outcome; they had no expectations or requirements that their audience hear or understand the messages they were attempting to convey. So long as their health permitted, both men remained unwaveringly committed to their respective missions. No successor was appointed for either man's lifetime works. Prior to embarking on his own lifetime of teaching post-enlightenment, Buddha had grave concerns few would be receptive to his message; he spoke anyway. Also, K was aware that the messages he was sharing were rarely heard and/or acted upon. In his famous speech, "Truth is a Pathless Land," he stated the following:

"*I am not concerned whether you pay attention to what I say or not. I want to do a certain thing in the world and I'm going to do it with unwavering concentration. I am concerning myself with only one essential thing: to set man free. I desire to free him from all cages, from all fears…*"[1]

Both men shared a deep love of nature and the natural world. K was about 27 years old when he sat under the pepper tree in Ojai, California, and experienced a profound shift in consciousness, often referred to as his moment of enlightenment. This event took place in 1922. In Mary Luyten's book, *The Years of Awakening*, K noted that during this event he could feel the vibration of Lord Buddha and that later, he was left with a resounding sense of Buddha's presence within his own heart. Many decades later, a spiritual seeker by the name of John E. Coleman (1930-2012), on his way to India, would have a brief but very impactful meeting with K. In his book, *The Quiet Mind*, Coleman recounts that chance encounter with K during an airport layover. Sharing a table together, Coleman was not aware that he was chatting with one of the most influential spiritual figures of the 20th century. The men passionately discussed such topics as philosophy, religion, knowledge, and understanding. K also shared his own life experience of losing his beloved brother, Nitya, to tuberculosis which led to K's insight that beyond the profound sense of grief and the loss from death lay an unfathomable joy that had never left him. Coleman asked K which historical religious figure had come closest to realizing ultimate truth. K replied emphatically that it was Buddha, though he added a caveat: he himself was not a Buddhist.

Connections to the Natural World

Buddha's experience of awakening also took place under a tree. Once he had resumed to take meals again after nearly starving to death, and seated under the Bodhi-tree, he cleansed his

mind through meditation until it was clear of any imperfections, purified. In this state, he was able to recollect the manifold of his thousands of past lives. He watched as lifetime after lifetime came and went noticing the pleasures and the pains, the deaths and rebirths that accompanied each life. He noted that this was the first true knowledge that he attained on the first night seated beneath the Bodhi-tree (Nānamoli, *The Life of the Buddha*, 23-24). According to Coomaraswamy and Horner in *Gotama the Buddha*, it was evident that Siddhattha had already developed the discipline and insight necessary to achieve liberation based on previous incarnations and that he was of lineal descendant to many of the previous Buddhas who had come before him.

At the age of 66, K began to record his observations of the natural world via a stream of consciousness approach eloquently describing his perceptions and insights into the interconnectedness between nature and humanity in a poetic, handwritten journal entitled, *Krishnamurti's Notebook*. He gracefully expressed a sense of communion with the organic cycles of life and death through contact with the natural world, relating his insights to human nature often illustrating the timeless wisdom offered by his direct perceptions of the world around him. For example:

"*The ripening rice fields were intense pink and green, a stretch of immediate attention. And the road that crossed the valley was purple and white, so alive that it was one of the rays that raced across the sky. You were of that light, burning, furious, exploding, without shadow, without root and word. And as the sun went further down, every colour became more violent, more intense and you were completely lost, past all recalling. It was an evening that had no memory.*

Every thought and feeling must flower for them to live and die; flowering of everything in you, the ambition, the greed, the hate, the joy, the passion; in the flowering there is their death and freedom. It is only in freedom that anything can flourish, not in suppression, in control and discipline; these only pervert, corrupt. Flowering and freedom is goodness and all virtue. To allow envy to flower is not easy; it is condemned or cherished but never given freedom. It is only in freedom the fact of envy reveals its colour, its shape, its depth, its peculiarities; if suppressed it will not reveal itself fully and freely. When it has shown itself completely, there is an ending of it only to reveal another fact, emptiness, loneliness, fear, and as each fact is allowed to flower, in freedom, in its entirety, the conflict between the observer and the observed ceases; there is no longer the censor but only observation, only seeing. Freedom can only be in completion not in repetition, suppression, obedience to a pattern of thought. There is completion only in flowering and dying; there is no flowering if there is no ending. What has continuity is thought in time. The flowering of thought is the ending of thought; for only in death is there the new."[2]

K insisted that our relationship with nature contains vital information about the workings of our own minds because life, as he saw it, is essentially nothing but relationship – with everything we encounter. Nature can mirror for us important aspects of ourselves and of the universe simply through our observation of the changing seasons, the differences perceived and experienced between a sunset or the dusk before the dawn, the continual mutations in color, shape and form of plants and flowers as time takes its toll, the movement of life through death and regeneration, the ever-changing scents and sounds of a world teaming with the vibrancy of life - subject, just as we are, to the forces of uncertainty, indivisibility, and

impermanence. Further, K explained that in our ignorance, we fail to perceive that all living beings are not only interconnected but an aspect of ourselves. If and when we are ever capable of understanding this divine connection between life and life, regardless of the species, we would be driven to end the violence in our lives and on our planet, Earth.

"*Nature is part of our life. We grew out of the seed, the earth, and we are part of all that, but we are rapidly losing the sense that we are animals like the others. Can you have a feeling for a tree, look at it, see the beauty of it, listen to the sound it makes; be sensitive to the little plant, to the little weed, to the creeper that is growing up the wall, to the light on the leaves and the many shadows? You must be aware of all this and have that sense of communion with nature around you. You may live in a town, but you do have trees here and there. The next-door garden may be ill-kept, crowded with weeds, but look at the flower in it, and feel that you are part of all that, part of all living things. If you hurt nature you are hurting yourself.*"[3]

The Use of Negations

Both the Buddha and K employed negations as a key method in their teachings. Negations, in this context, are the opposite of affirmations. Rather than providing absolute answers, both used negations to deconstruct concepts by highlighting what is not true about something. A negation involves defining something in terms of what it is not - essentially excluding certain possibilities. For example, to understand the concept of "not action," one must first have an understanding of what "action" is, since the negation of "action" arises from recognizing the object that is being excluded. Thus, negation is a process of conceptualizing what a thing is by identifying what it is not. For example, from the *Dhammapada*, vv. 141-2, a discourse entitled "All These Things Avail Not" states the following:

"*Not nakedness, nor matted hair, nor filth,*
Nor fasting long, nor lying on the ground,
Not dust and dirt, nor squatting on the heels,
Can cleanse the mortal that is full of doubt.

But one that lives a calm and tranquil life,
Though gaily decked, - if tamed, restrained he live,
Walking the holy path in righteousness,
Laying aside all harm to living things, -
True mendicant, ascetic, Brāhmin he."[4]

K frequently used negations to encourage deeper reflection on words that, in his view, were often used thoughtlessly, without a true understanding of their meaning (e.g., love). His aim was to dismantle mental constructs, assumptions, and conditioned patterns of thinking. Rather than simply rejecting or denying things, his approach to negation sought to reveal the limitations, contradictions, and complexities in the way we typically perceive and understand reality. K felt that much of human suffering and conflict stemmed from deeply ingrained conditioning - our belief systems, ideologies, and the expectations we have based on past experiences. To see clearly and to experience the world in an unmediated way, he suggested that we first needed to free ourselves from these conditioned responses. By negating (e.g., negating the self, negating authority, negating preconceptions, etc.), he aimed to initiate a

direct awareness of the present moment, unclouded by the filters of past experiences. For example:

"*Love is not memory. Love is not experience. Love is not the thinking about the person that one loves, for then it is merely thought. You cannot think of love. You can think of the person you love or are devoted to - your guru, your image, your wife, your husband; but the thought, the symbol, is not the real which is love. Therefore love is not an experience.*

When there is love there is action, is there not?, and is that action not liberating? It is not the result of mentation, and there is no gap between love and action, as there is between idea and action. Idea is always old, casting its shadow on the present and we are ever trying to build a bridge between action and idea. When there is love - which is not mentation, which is not ideation, which is not memory, which is not the outcome of an experience, of a practised discipline - then that very love is action. That is the only thing that frees. So long as there is mentation, so long as there is the shaping of action by an idea which is experience, there can be no release; and so long as that process continues, all action is limited. When the truth of this is seen, the quality of love, which is not mentation, which you cannot think about, comes into being."[5]

Another famous negation used by K is found in his famous speech, "Truth is a pathless land." Here, negation was used to highlight that truth cannot be followed as a prescribed path, nor can it be defined by dogma or ideology.

No Authority, No Master

"*If you are very clear, if you are inwardly a light unto yourself, you will never follow anyone.*"[6]

In the Introduction to her book, *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti*, biographer Mary Lutyens, stated that K requested that there should be no authoritative interpretation of his teachings. He did, however, encourage inquiring minds to delve into these topics using his talks and dialogues as a guide. K, who considered himself to be an ordinary man, never wanted to be attached to the role of guru nor did he want any disciples. Nevertheless, he had disciples. Unlike the Buddha, K did not form a spiritual community or "*sangha*" after dissolving the OSE in 1929. Instead, he traveled and spoke independently and offered no formal training program or guidance around meditation. He was adamant, however, that all answers lie within the person. From an interview in the Washington Post, 1985, K stated the following:

"'*There is nothing to be learnt from anybody, including the speaker [K]... The speaker has nothing to teach you. The speaker is merely acting as a mirror in which you can see yourself. Then when you can see yourself clearly you can discard the mirror.*'"[7]

K further went on to warn of the dangers when one's knowledge becomes the authority. He argued that when either an external or internal authority takes precedence, genuine insight becomes impossible. (Krishnamurti, *Can Humanity Change?* 116). In the context of modern education, this caution is particularly relevant. Contemporary systems of education often emphasize the accumulation of ideas, information, and what is perceived as "facts," treating them as the essence of knowledge. In this process, students tend to place their trust in

educators as authority figures, passively receiving knowledge rather than actively engaging with it.

However, K's vision for education went beyond the mere transfer of information. He sought a model where students could come to experience reality firsthand, free from the distortions of external authorities or the mental filters of judgment and labels. Instead of merely accumulating knowledge, he invited students and listeners to shed their habitual thought patterns, approach life with a fresh and open perspective, and learn directly from their own experiences. This process, according to K, would allow for a kind of learning that transcends traditional forms of knowledge acquisition. He believed that if a person remains tied to a sense of "authority," whether internal or external, they are incapable of discovering anything truly new. In his educational philosophy, this idea is evident in the schools he established, where the teacher's role was not to impose authority but to act as a facilitator, guiding both student and teacher in a shared process of discovery and learning.

Similarly, the Buddha shared a vision of liberation that echoed Krishnamurti's insights. Buddha insisted that those seeking liberation and the cessation of suffering (including rebirth) must test his teachings for themselves. He emphasized the importance of personal experience over reliance on external authorities, gurus, or spiritual figures. While K did not provide detailed instructions or share personal anecdotes from his own journey, Buddha offered simple, practical guidance, which he believed everyone must apply and test in their own life. This guidance, however, was never meant to be followed blindly. Instead, it was a path that each person had to explore for themselves, adjusting it in alignment with their own unique circumstances and understanding of the world. Both K and the Buddha, in this sense, advocated for an approach to learning and self-discovery that rejected reliance on external authorities, urging individuals to look inward and engage directly with their own experiences to uncover deeper truths.

"*Again and again the Buddha insisted that no teaching is of the slightest authority to the individual until it had been tested in the fires of personal experience, found to accord with reason and common sense, and been intuitively ratified as true. Thereafter it ceases to be 'authority', and becomes for that individual a part of his own enlightenment. The Buddha's dying words still ring down the centuries in their timeless wisdom: 'Work out your own salvation, with diligence.'*"[8]

Instructions & Training

Both the Buddha and K provided little, if any, specific guidance on what a seeker should do on the spiritual path. K had a clear reason for this approach - he wanted to prevent people from simply mimicking his experiences or adopting his words as their own, which could lead them to falsely believe they had achieved something they had not. In many of his published dialogues, it's evident that some of those he spoke with were merely repeating ideas they had heard him express before. This was exactly what K hoped to avoid, though he also recognized it as an unavoidable human tendency when one's thought processes are fragmented and the self is caught in unending cycles of becoming. We humans have a natural inclination to mimic others, often because we are trying to protect the self, our constructed self-image, which we believe will give us security and stability.

Albert Camus once said that "*Integrity has no use of rules*." For Camus, integrity involved a person's commitment to authenticity and honesty with themselves, rather than adherence to a set of external rules or societal norms. Integrity can be defined as living in alignment with one's true self, even in the face of the absurdity of existence. If one relies on external rules or systems to guide one's actions, there is an inherent risk of living a life that is inauthentic – a life that is dictated by forces outside oneself, such as social conventions, religious doctrines, or moral codes. Camus' philosophy is very much in alignment with K and Buddha's teachings in this regard. Humans cling to their rules and instructions which appear to function by providing a sense of psychological security and stability when one does not have enough self-awareness and courage to look within for answers. In the case of K, he unequivocally never gave advice about the spiritual path and rarely spoke of his own personal experiences related to how he arrived at a place of such clear and brilliant lucidity, a state of complete presence.

In reviewing some of the oldest Buddhist scriptures from the *Dhammapada*, it seems that the Buddha was reluctant to provide instructions but rather shared his insights through the use of stories or parables leaving the adept to inquire within himself as to the correct course of action in any particular situation. Below are examples taken from the *Dhammapada*, some of the earliest known recorded information available that describe the words of the Buddha directly spoken to his disciples and recorded some 400-500 years after his death. The *Dhammapada* is contained within the Pāli Canon of Theravāda Buddhism. From the *Majjhima Nikāya* (Collection of Middle-length Discourses), "The Parable of Timber," Buddha shared his position on "moral rules."

"*Talking of man's release from worldly bondages the Blessed One spoke thus:*

Suppose, bhikkhus, a man is in need of sound timber and he goes about in search of it.

He comes near a mighty tree, strong and tall, capable of yielding sound timber. But the man passes by this tree and cuts away wood and bark that is not sound and takes it away with him.

What would you say of such a man?

What would you think of him, who could not see the difference between sound timber and branch wood and twigs? His need of sound timber would ever remain unfulfilled.

In the same way, O brethren, the real holy life does not inhere in name and fame, nor even in the observance of moral rules nor even in scholarship, knowledge and insight.

The true holy life inheres in the release of the heart from all bondage."[9]

Another example, from the *Dīgha Nikāya* (Collection of Long Discourses), also indicates that Buddha did not provide any set of instructions related to the spiritual path that he spoke about from the time he delivered his First Sermon in Sarnath to the Last Sermon prior to his death. Additionally, this sermon contains evidence that the Buddha never wanted his disciples to

follow him or anyone else which is very similar to K's position that one must find his answers within himself. This sermon is entitled "The Last Sermon."

"*Before the Enlightened One discarded his mortal coil, he addressed his disciple Ananda in the following words:*

What, Ananda, do the bhikkhus expect that I should not attain utter Nirvana unless I have given them full instructions about it? Ananda, I have preached the truth to each and all without any distinction or reservation.

I have never had a closed fist as a teacher and I have never kept anything back.

Further, I do not for a moment think that I lead the Order or that the Order is dependent upon me. Why then should I be expected to leave any instructions?

I am now grown old and my life's journey is drawing to the close. Just as a worn out cart can be made to move along only with great difficulty and care, so can my body be kept going for some time.

Therefore, Ananda, the bhikkhus of the Order should not lean upon my help or any external help. You must rely upon your own selves and you must be your own lamps to show you the path.

Hold fast to the Truth as a lamp. Seek salvation only in the Truth. Do not look for assistance outside yourselves.

Overcome the grief and pain that arise from the cravings of the body, overcome the grief and pain that arise from the craving due to ideas, intellect or emotions. Be strenuous, thoughtful and mindful, whenever cravings in any form arise.

Whoever they are Ananda, either now or after I am no more, who go along having the Self as lamp, having the Self as refuge and no other refuge, having the Dhamma as lamp, having the Dhamma as refuge and no other refuge, those bhikkhus will attain Nirvana.[10]

It is likely that many of the rules and instructions commonly associated with Buddhism emerged after the Buddha's death. As Buddhist scholar Edward Conze noted, the Buddha placed his trust in his disciples, guiding them through training in moral restraint, meditation, and philosophical reflection. However, this does not necessarily imply that specific instructions or rules were part of his original teaching. Given that many monks and nuns left their lay lives to live in monastic communities (*sanghas*), it seems reasonable that guidelines would have eventually been established to help these communities function harmoniously and to provide clarity on how members should co-exist together. In fact, one could argue that some form of rules is essential for any group of people living in close-knit communal settings. Conze suggests that the development of these rules can be attributed to later Buddhist writers.

"*Innumerable misunderstandings would have been avoided if one had seen that the statements of*

Buddhist writers are not meant to be propositions about the nature of reality, but advice on how to act, statements about modes of behaviour, and the experiences connected with them. 'If you want to get there, then you must do this.' 'If you do this, you will experience this.'"[11]

The Illusion of the self

Another parallel in the teachings of both men relate to the notion of an individual and unique "self" as the root cause of all suffering. "Self," according to Buddha and K, appears to be nothing more than an illusion, a product of fragmented thought, a hindrance to awakening, and the greatest barrier to the perception of the Absolute, the Truth. It is this "self" that is ever caught up in becoming that which it is not and serves as the primary factor responsible for rebirth (i.e., dissatisfaction with the life one has lived and the desire for a "better" life). The "self," referred to as the "small self" by Coomaraswamy, is responsible for a person's reality creation based on that person's perceptions of the world, which is then perceived as the final, ultimate reality. However, this reality creation appears to be nothing more than a synthesis of one's own conditioning in their present lifetime as well as the causal influences of karma and conditioning from past lifetimes.

In Pāli, *anatta*, can be understood to mean "not-self." As early as our toddler years, we become familiar with concepts such as "I" "me" and "mine." These ideas are validated and encouraged through societal and cultural conditioning and further reinforced through our interactions in our primary environments with our caregivers and family members who also see the "self" as something individualized and separate from the whole of humanity. "*We would be perfectly happy, quite blissfully happy, as happy as, according to some psychologists, the child in the womb, if we first could get rid of our selves*."[12] In this sense, thought creates the idea of an "I" which Buddha, various Buddhist scholars, and K agreed is nothing more than a figment of the imagination as the "I" cannot exist outside of the "self," and therefore pertains to nothing real. Real meaning immutable, unchanging, and everlasting; illusion meaning that which is impermanent and subject to change. Later Buddhism, however, adopted a doctrine of "no-soul" which was never expressed by Buddha himself through the discourses he shared over the course of his lifetime (Humphries, *Buddhism*, 20). According to Paul Carus:

"*There is self and there is truth. Where self is, truth is not. Where truth is, self is not. Self is the fleeting error of samsāra; it is individual separateness and that egotism which begets envy and hatred. Self is the yearning for pleasure and the lust after vanity. Truth is the correct comprehension of things; it is the permanent and everlasting, the real in all existence, the bliss of righteousness. The existence of self is an illusion, and there is no wrong in this world, no vice, no evil, except what flows from the assertion of self. The attainment of truth is possible only when self is recognized as an illusion. Righteousness can be practised only when we have freed our mind from passions of egotism. Perfect peace can dwell only where all vanity has disappeared.*"[13]

These concepts of "self" and "Self" are addressed in Buddha's First Sermon. The doctrine of liberation shared with the five bhikkhus named this "self" as a "*mutable psycho-physical individuality*" that men refer to as "I" which should not be confused with "Self" (Coomaraswamy & Horner, *Gotama the Buddha*, 5). Coomaraswamy referred to the "Self" as the "Great Self." What is this "self" that enslaves us in suffering? What does it mean to

understand the ways of the self? According to K, the self is "*the name, the form, the body, the organism*."[14] In other words, it is everything that comprises the I, the me, and the mine, all of which are transitory and ultimately dissolve upon the death of the physical body. "*Any person would be infinitely happier if he could accept the loss of his 'individual self'… the very mother of illusions*."[15]

According to K, there was only one virtue and one vice within all of humanity and that was the self-identification with the "I," which is also referred to as the self or the ego. When the "I" is not present, then one is truly capable of living a virtuous life for it is the "I" that is continually seeking to improve itself in order to strengthen itself (Mehta & Mehta, *J. Krishnamurti and Sant Kabir*, 11).

"*There must be suffering as long as there is no understanding of the ways of the self.*"[16]

"*The self is a problem that thought cannot resolve. There must be an awareness which is not of thought. To be aware, without condemnation or justification, of the activities of the self – just to be aware – is sufficient.*"[17]

The self, comprised of the many image(s) created by thought and used to define ourselves, appears to be manufactured by the mind and perpetuated and nourished through the process of thought, imagination, and registration (i.e., memory). In psychological language, it is commonly termed the ego. It serves many functions in our day-to-day living – most importantly it defines who we are as humans. It also offers us protection from the harsh realities of our competitive existence by constantly re-evaluating our identity as well as our place in the world. However, since it is based within the cycle of unclear and fragmentary thinking, the self actually prevents a person from perceiving life and the world around him openly and directly, therefore giving rise to desire, fear, separation, isolation, and ultimately, suffering. Because this notion of self is firmly rooted in the mind and is, for the most part, unconscious, individuals are continually creating their own version of reality - both externally and internally. Psychoanalyst, Allen Wheelis (1915–2007), described the workings of the mind and reality creation, in this regard, most beautifully in his book, *The Scheme of Things*:

"*The scheme of things is a system of order. Beginning as our view of the world, it finally becomes our world. We live within the space defined by its coordinates. It is self-evidently true, is accepted so naturally and automatically that one is not aware of an act of acceptance having taken place. It comes with one's mother's milk, is chanted in school, proclaimed in the White House, insinuated by television, validated at Harvard. Like the air we breathe, the scheme of things disappears, becomes simple reality, the way things are. It is the lie necessary to life. The world as it exists beyond that scheme becomes vague, irrelevant, largely unperceived, finally non-existent.*"[18]

In the February 1931 edition of the International Star Bulletin (ISB), E. A. Wodehouse presented his "Notes of Talks with Krishnamurti: Life and the Ego." From K's perspective, based on his own self-inquiry and self-observation, the ego is not an entity in and of itself but rather what he refers to as a "symptom" of a spiritual malady and internal disorder. K went on to explain that if humans were spiritually healthy, no entity referred to as "I" would be present. Per K:

"*It [the "I"] arises in consciousness only when the free flow of life is obstructed. We can find a familiar analogy in our own bodies. Normally we are quite unconscious of our internal organs; they only obtrude themselves upon our notice when something goes wrong. In the same way, if we were in perfect spiritual health, we should be conscious of no separate I-ness.*"[19]

K explained that the experience of an "ego," as a representation of our objective beingness, is the result of intelligence which has not been fully liberated. Within each human being resides a polarity comprised of reason and love as well as the capacity to experience both the "otherness" of another person as well as a unity or "oneness" shared between two people that cannot exist when separative egos are attempting to relate with one another. Reason, often referred to by K as awareness, and love, implying unity consciousness, must find a balance within human consciousness in order to liberate one's intelligence:

"*When… we have Love and Reason at full tension, then each perfects the other. Reason gives eyes to Love; Love gives warmth to Reason. Reason makes Love impersonal; Love prevents Reason from passing into indifference. The ideal relation between two people will thus be one in which each recognizes and respects to the full the unique individuality of the other, while embracing this in an absolute oneness. It is from this extremity of tension that there arises the true bliss of the liberated life. To know anyone or anything as completely unique and "other", and at the same time to know him or it as part of oneself, is the supreme happiness.*"[20]

K explained that one way we can experience both the presence and absence of our own ego-consciousness is through applying oneself wholly and completely to a particular task such as washing the dishes or painting a picture. If one can fully engage or submerge themselves in the task with absolute presence, one will notice that the ego appears to step aside and there is no separation between the person and the task itself - a dancer might describe this as becoming the dance where the immersion in the activity is so complete that the dancer and the dance are one. In this sense, many people unconsciously shift between states of ego-consciousness and conscious awareness without knowing it. K also mentioned that the state of conscious awareness the dish washer, the painter or the dancer may experience, once fully absorbed in their task, is not the same as liberated consciousness. Once the task has been completed, the ego-consciousness of the person returns and the individual "I" is re-established whereas a fully liberated intelligence remains in a state where the person is aware of both the otherness as well as the unity contained within all life. This intelligence can hold both the objective and subjective aspects of life and experience while residing in harmony.

In the section entitled "Universal Action," from "Notes of Talks with Krishnamurti: Life and the Ego" Wodehouse explains:

"*The whole of life can exist within a single point, if the life in that point be absolutely pure. This is what makes it possible for the life of the liberated man to be, at one and the same time, individual and universal. Pure life, as such, can never act otherwise than universally. And so, when a man has absolutely purified himself – when he has removed from his nature the last traces of egotism and separateness – universal action automatically supervenes, even though there be behind all this thinking, feeling and doing that unique I which is the living subject in all these activities. Universality, in short,*

is a matter, not of what a man is, but of what he does. And this cannot but be true, seeing that life itself is not mere passive Being, but an active movement and energy… In so far as a man thinks, acts and feels universally, then he is universal. His Being is his life; and his life is what he lives. And so the real question is not whether there is an Ego, and whether this persists or is abolished; but rather, whether that which is behind all thinking, feeling and acting as a living and unique I is capable of becoming the active subject in a process of universal living and so, by and through its activities, of transcending its own uniqueness."[21]

The "self," in addition to creating a false view of our external reality, also stretches its imagination further to create an equally corrupt view of internal reality - producing self-importance, grandiosity, and narcissism (a state of greater than another) or the direct opposite of low self-worth (a state of less than other). Either way, the self is constantly embroiled in the turmoil of comparison, judgment, and evaluation as it relates to other human beings (i.e., the images created of self and others). In a discussion with K in Rome, 1966, a questioner boldly stated to K "*I must think for myself*" to which K replied:

"*You are not an individual. You are the result of your country, your culture, your knowledge. We like to think we are individuals. There is nothing but second-hand.*"[22]

What does K mean when he concludes that there is nothing but second-hand? This theme is prevalent throughout K's teachings yet is not unique to his teachings. The Buddha also taught that our belief in ourselves as separate, unique beings is a mere fallacy created by the mind to ward off pain and suffering, to reinforce a false sense of self in an effort to maintain our position in the overall scheme of things. From birth, human beings are conditioned towards a longing to "be" something or someone - be unique, be intelligent, be different from one another, be the same as each other, be special, be self-sufficient, be powerful, etc. In this striving to "be" (also referred to as "becoming") something that is not in alignment with who or what one truly appears to be, people begin to lose touch with actual reality and believe in the manufactured, false persona(s) created by thought. Consequently, one is not able to see oneself clearly, because, to look deeply at ourselves puts our self-image at huge risk. After all, who wants to see that maybe we are all second-hand? Who wants to discover that underneath all the conditioning, self-deception, desiring and fear, we may not be so very different from one another? Mark Epstein's work, *Thoughts without a Thinker*, reiterates a similar point:

"*No matter what we do, the Buddha taught, we cannot sustain the illusion of our self sufficiency. We are all subject to decay, old age, and death, to disappointment, loss and disease. We are all engaged in a futile struggle to maintain ourselves in our own image.*"[23]

Ira Rechtshaffer relates to this theme as well, from K's perspective, in his doctoral dissertation entitled, "*The Awakened Mind: A Comparative Study of J. Krishnamurti, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, and Bubba Free John*":

"Krishnamurti explains that the individual is perpetually engaged in an effort to find psychological security, mainly because he is afraid to have a direct perception of insubstantiality. So one ceaselessly protects a thing which is not, which is merely an idea. It is the continual effort to fortify oneself that prevents the direct relationship with 'what is.'"[24]

While this insubstantiality suggests a lacking of substance or solidity, it could further be defined as our fear of facing "the nobody" or from the Buddhist perspective, facing "emptiness." What might happen if we have the experience of facing ourselves as we are, without our ideas, filters, all prior conditioning, and our associated belief systems? If we no longer identified with our manufactured self-images, we would be free to be nobody but our own true nature, the unconditioned true essence of who we really are. What is it that we are truly attempting to avoid in this never-ending cycle of image-making? Living without a self-image could be disorienting at first, especially in a society that places a lot of emphasis on identity and self-expression. It may feel as though one has lost oneself. However, it could lead to a deep sense of peace, acceptance, and alignment with the present moment. The challenge is to embrace the uncertainty and fluidity of life without falling back into old habits of defining oneself. Ultimately, living without a fixed self-image would not mean abandoning a sense of self altogether. Rather, it would entail relaxing the need to create and maintain a rigid identity and instead embrace a more dynamic, open way of being in the world – allowing life to unfold organically, moment by moment, without needing to define or control it.

"*The Buddha, or any Arahant, is a "Nobody" ; one cannot properly ask his name.*"[25]

The only difference between K's teaching and Buddhism regarding "self" and "Self" lies in the Buddhist belief that the true Self must be steadily developed (Humphreys, *Buddhism*, 16) which implies time and becoming. K might argue that time would not be required for one to have a direct perception of their true nature through observation of the movement of thought. In this sense, a radical transformation of one's mind could occur outside of psychological time and in the present moment. However, both K and Buddha understood that the path of self-extinction would be very difficult for people to grasp. Since many people, if not all, associate their value through their worldly interests, physical appearance, achievements, accumulated knowledge (different from wisdom), and their possessions - their worth, therefore, contingent upon their self-hood.

"*Nirvāna remains incomprehensible and mysterious to the vulgar whose minds are beclouded with worldly interests.*"[26]

The Observer is The Observed

A key question posed to both Buddhist practitioners as well as K's audiences was the question "Who am I?" This question essentially summarizes the key foundation of the path of liberation – one's ability to know themselves, one's ability to monitor and/or contemplate the thinker and the thinker's thoughts, the observer and the observed. According to K, without self-knowledge, right thinking is not possible and without right thinking, one will never know peace or love for themselves. He went on to explain that to understand the totality of right thinking, we must look deeply and honestly at all that is false in the movement of our own thoughts which begs the question "Who is the one who thinks and what is the relationship between thinker and thoughts?"

In simple terms, K's idea that "the observer is the observed" means that the person who is looking at or judging something is not separate from what they are observing. He noticed that

our thoughts, feelings, and perceptions shape how we see the world, and often, these mental constructs influence what we experience. So, when we observe something - whether it is ourselves, others, or the world - our personal beliefs and biases are already a part of that observation. In essence, we cannot separate ourselves from what we see because we are so deeply connected to it. As K explained, the observer is made up of memories, experiences, social programming, etc. and creates both positive and negative images of self and other, relative to the observer's conditioning and desires. The disparity between the various images inevitably leads to internal division and conflict between the observer and the observed. Further, the craving for continuity between the thought-created images leads to internal and external division and conflict within the observer.

The concept of the "Observer" is also found within early Buddhist texts. For example, from *Studies in the Middle Way: Being Thoughts on Buddhism Applied*, by Christmas Humphreys:

"*Before a man can settle the proper reaction to his circumstances he must learn to face their nature without phantasy or added attribute. Such cool analysis of the objects of perception will enable the observer to distinguish the nature of things from the value of things, and to realize that the value of things is an attribute which the observing mind decides to add to or withhold from attributeless circumstance. Good and evil, for example, are qualities imposed on facts by the mind. It may be a fact that it is raining, but to describe the weather as good or bad is an addition of the mind's opinion, for the farmer may regard as good what the host at a garden party bitterly regards as bad. It must be realized, further, that the nature and the value of things are alike changing, even as the mind of the beholder is constantly changing in its attribution of significance to the ceaseless flow of events. It is wise to learn humility in the face of this vast panorama of cause-effect…*

The tapestry of circumstance is woven of the weft of things upon the warp of happenings. Facts are the bodies of someone's thought, and like all forms have a life of their own, with the usual cycle of birth, growth, decay, and death. Their use is to enshrine or mould the force of life, as the banks of a river mould and give direction to the river's flow. In combination, facts provide experience, which is the raw material for the spirit's growth. The wise man, therefore, plucks from the passing stream of circumstance those happenings which best subserve the mind's requirements, selecting the knowledge which, digested, may be turned into wisdom."[27]

Utilizing the faculties of discrimination and discernment, through self-observation in meditation, one can come to question the validity of one's thoughts, ideas, and projections – to truly discern that which is true from that which is false which could be determined through the use of negations. In K's book, *The Awakening of Intelligence*, he explained that in order to find out what truth is, one must be able to see that which is false in one's thinking. He maintained that only right thinking could bring about understanding and through understanding, the end of dualistic thinking. He explained that when the thinker and his thoughts were integrated through meditation, one could access the Truth, the Absolute, "the ecstasy of the Real." From K's *Early Writings, Volume IV*, K concludes that the thinker and thought(s) are not separate from one another:

"*Is the thinker separate from his thought? Are not the thinker and his thought an inseparable phenomenon? Why do we separate the thought from the thinker? Is it not one of the cunning tricks of*

the mind so that the thinker can change his garb according to circumstances, yet remain the same? Outwardly there is the appearance of change but inwardly the thinker continues to be as he is."[28]

To see what is truly in front of us and not just our own image or projection, K suggested that we need to be fully aware of our thoughts and reactions in the moment, without judgment or attachment. In essence, it is about being fully present and observing without the usual mental filters or emotional responses that shape what we think we are seeing. The more we can do this, the closer we get to perceiving reality as it actually is, without interference from our own projections. For example:

- When we observe something within ourselves, be aware of thoughts and feelings as they arise. Avoid the tendency to react automatically or let past experiences shape perception. Notice when the desire to start labeling or judging arises.
- Try to let go of labels like "good" or "bad" and simply observe what is there. This means letting go of usual projections or assumptions and allowing the moment to unfold without imposing past experiences or beliefs onto it.
- Let go of opinions or expectations. If we can watch our own reactions without being attached to them, we can start seeing the reality of what is in front of us, without filtering it through the mind.
- K also emphasized that a quiet, undistracted mind allows for clearer observation. The quieter the mind, the less likely it is to project or distort reality based on personal biases.

"*So what is our problem? To understand the thinker and not merely to transform or modify his thoughts. His thoughts and his actions indicate the thinker. Through the awareness of his thoughts-feelings the maker of them is known. You cannot come upon the maker if there is mere judgement of his thoughts-feelings-actions; in following them up, the thinker is discovered. In thinking-feeling through every thought-feeling, the thinker in all his different forms, in different guises, in different poses is discovered. All the threads of his thoughts-feelings lead to him; they must be followed up, however trivial or stupid, and understood. If all the cunning expressions of the thinker are observed, studied and understood, revalued again and again, then the thinker ceases to be. If the leaves and branches are cut down over and over again, the tree dies. If every thought-feeling-action is thought out – felt out and so understood, completed, then the center; the thinker, the becomer, ceases to be. The thinker is no longer the experiencer with his uncreative accumulations, memories. Then the thinker, being utterly silent, is no longer gathering or rejecting; in that deep wisdom of silence is the timeless creation of the eternal. Do not speculate upon it, do not formulate it, but become aware of every thought-feeling-action. The flame of awareness burns away all hindrances, blockages, and in that flame the real is. Then that flame, when it has burnt away all bondages, is self-illuminated, causeless, deathless.*"[29]

On Consciousness & Becoming

What is consciousness from a Buddhist perspective? According to the early teachings of Buddha, consciousness, *Vinnānam* (Skt. *vijnāna*), is viewed as one of the five *khandhas* or aggregates that make up the small "self" forever bound by cycles of death and rebirth as well as unceasing lifetimes of pain and suffering. Earlier definitions from the Upanishads refer to *vijnāna* as discernment, intelligence, wisdom, and even as life-force. Author and Buddhist

Scholar, T. W. Rhys Davids (1843-1922), referred to it as a synonym for the mental force that operates through the material body. Author and Buddhist Scholar, Frank L. Woodward (1871-1952), noted that *vinnānam* referred to "*the Arahant's consciousness of Nibbāna… Nibbāna is therefore a state beyond mind-consciousness. In its ordinary sense vinnānam is perishable, as one of the five skandhas.*"[30] Buddha taught that consciousness, like all things, is impermanent and arises due to interdependent conditions. It does not exist as a permanent or unchanging entity but is conditioned by other factors, such as sensory perception, mental formations, and previous experiences. All the *khandhas* (i.e., physical body, sensation/feelings, perceptions, impulses/volitions, emotions, and consciousness) are continually morphing between states of movement and rest, evolution, and de-evolution, therefore it defies basic reason and logic to assume that there is a personal aspect of the human that is both immortal and eternal.

Buddhist philosophy often presents consciousness as a continuum. This means that consciousness is not a singular, fixed entity but a flow of mental states that arise and pass away in response to various conditions and personal circumstances. This flow continues from moment to moment, throughout life, and even into future lives. So, who or what is it that seeks enlightenment? According to Christmas Humphries, it is consciousness itself:

"*The answer is **consciousness**, the integrating factor or Self which, subject like all else to anicca, change, and dukkha, suffering, is unquestionably anatta [not-Self], lacking a permanent immortal some thing which separates it from the Whole.*

The Way from the unreal to the Real, from the existing fact of Enlightenment to its realization is long, and no one life on earth or a hundred of them will bring the pilgrim to that goal. Rebirth, not of a changeless soul, but of an ever evolving, karma-created bundle of characteristics is accepted by the whole world east of Karachi, and only in the West must text-books of Buddhism give it space. The evolving consciousness achieves successive states of spiritual achievement until the last, to our mortal knowledge, is reached in Buddhahood. Only then is the self entirely dead, to rise no more, and the Self, released from the last of its Fetters, is merged as a dew-drop in the Shining Sea."[31]

To understand the question "What is consciousness?" from K's perspective, we must first consider what or who is experiencing it. According to K, a person is essentially a composite of past conditioning influenced by various forces - family, society, culture, religion, education, and so on. He described consciousness as the totality of all experiences, thoughts, feelings, actions, motives, desires, pleasures, fears, inspirations, longings, hopes, sorrows, and joys. In this view, consciousness encompasses everything that makes up the content of the mind. At a public gathering in Brockwood Park 1982, K responded to a question from the audience asking, "*What do you mean by brain, mind and consciousness*?"[32] In response to this question, K first clarified that consciousness (or to be conscious) simply means to be aware, to be attentive to the contents and activities of the mind in the present moment with an intention to be curious and to learn how one's own mind is actually functioning. He went on to describe consciousness as part of the brain since without the brain, there could be no consciousness. K then spoke of the limitations of the brain due to our inevitable conditioning, the result of accumulated knowledge (not intelligence) and experience. Because of this conditioning, however, it becomes impossible to understand or experience the infinite nature of mind

without the shackles of fear, faith or the past memories/experiences influencing the mind's activity.

K often highlighted that thought plays a central role in consciousness, shaping much of our mental activity. He argued that thought, which is influenced by time and memory, governs the majority of our experience. However, he also observed that while thought is necessary for practical everyday functioning, it is the source of much of the conflict, division, and fragmentation in the human mind. From the Madras 4th Public Talk on January 13, 1952:

"*So, consciousness, as we know it, is a process of time. When are you conscious? When there is response, pleasant or unpleasant. Otherwise you are not conscious. Are you? When there is fear, you are conscious. When there is frustration, you are aware of yourself being frustrated. When there is joy, you are aware of it. When consciousness comes into action, when desire is thwarted, frustrated or when desire finds fulfilment, you are equally aware. So, what we know is that consciousness is a process of time, confined, limited, narrowed down to the thought process… The individual is the product of time, and it is memory, consciousness, the 'me' narrowed down to a particular form and name. 'I' refers to both the conscious mind functioning as well as the unconscious.*"[33]

K acknowledged a division that had been created between the conscious and the unconscious mind in contemporary psychology. He described the unconscious as all the contents of one's own personal past as well as the "*memories of thousands of years of man*" indicating that the collective unconscious was also a factor in influencing mind and therefore consciousness meaning that there were different levels to be explored, both the personal and the collective. However, he felt that both conscious and unconscious comprised only one state as humans primarily operate from the conscious mind, referred to as the upper levels of mind, while completely disregarding or unaware of the lower levels of the unconscious mind. K did not see these states as separate because he felt that people were never actually conscious in the present moment and that any experience of consciousness was always related to either the past or the future and therefore limited (Krishnamurti, *The First and Last Freedom*, 222-223). He additionally stated that the past conditioning inevitably impacts present time functioning as the conscious mind would be guided by the influence of the unconscious and therefore there was no real division between conscious and unconscious in a person who was not aware of their own conditioning.

"*If you watch your own mind at work, you will see that the movement to the past and to the future is a process in which the present is not. Either the past is a means of escape from the present, which may be unpleasant, or the future is a hope away from the present. So the mind is occupied with the past or with the future and sloughs off the present… therefore it is never capable of looking directly and impartially at any fact. It either condemns and rejects the fact or accepts and identifies itself with the fact. Such a mind is obviously not capable of seeing any fact as a fact. That is our state of consciousness which is conditioned by the past and our thought is the conditioned response to the challenge of a fact; the more you respond according to the conditioning of belief, of the past, the more there is the strengthening of the past. That strengthening of the past is obviously the continuity of itself, which it calls the future. So that is the state of our mind, of our consciousness - a pendulum swinging backwards and forwards between the past and the future… Such consciousness obviously cannot function at a different level, because it only knows those two movements of backwards and forwards.*"[34]

A central theme in K's writings, public talks, and dialogues is his understanding that every human being is part of a larger whole he referred to as "the world." He observed that, because we are not encouraged, from childhood onwards, to live autonomously or to seek our own answers, people tend to accept external authorities and narratives to understand themselves and the world around them. We are also rarely taught to recognize the commonalities we share with others. Instead, we are often conditioned to focus on differences, which leads to division, competition, and, in extreme cases, hatred and violence. K, however, believed that, fundamentally, we are far more alike than we are different – especially with regards to consciousness. Both he and Buddha emphasized the interconnectedness of all things, including people. From this perspective, it becomes clear that meaningful, transformative change in the world must begin at the individual level, and that personal transformation will inevitably ripple out to affect the collective. Rather than wait for a "savior" to come and relieve us from the catastrophic mess we face today as a species (with only ourselves and our generations of ancestors to blame), we can take the bold step of looking at ourselves individually, with tremendous courage and self-honesty, and engage in the inner work necessary to address our own personal suffering.

"*You know, wherever one goes in the world, human beings are more or less the same. Their manners, behaviour and outward pattern of action may differ, but psychologically, inwardly, their problems are the same. Man throughout the world is confused, that is the first thing one observes. Uncertain, insecure, he is groping, searching, asking, looking for a way out of this chaos. So he goes to teachers, to yogis, to gurus, to philosophers; he is looking everywhere for an answer and probably that is why most of you are here, because we want to find a way out of this trap in which we are caught, without realizing that we, as human beings, have made this trap - it is of our own making and nobody else's. The society in which we live is the result of our psychological state. The society is ourselves, the world is ourselves, the world is not different from us. What we are we have made the world because we are confused, we are ambitious, we are greedy, seeking power, position, prestige. We are aggressive, brutal, competitive, and we build a society which is equally competitive, brutal and violent. It seems to me that our responsibility is to understand ourselves first, because we are the world.*"[35]

Our confusion and competitive, aggressive nature are born of our conditioning as well as our desire to be someone other than who we are or to be perceived by others in a particular way. This gives rise to the notion of becoming. As we are, we think we are not enough so are continually striving to improve or better ourselves – to become the person we consider to be ideal, virtuous – the ideal citizen worthy of rewards, status and riches because we have overcome the mundane, the mediocrity of the world. Nothing could be further from the truth. Society imbeds an idea in our consciousness that we need to always strive towards perfection – to be the best version of ourselves. In this sense, we are never alive and present in the moment as we are continually hungering to be that which we are not. This desire is clearly tied to the small "self" and is in opposition to our very being-ness.

"*Being is infinitely more significant than becoming. Being is not the opposite of becoming; if it's the opposite or in opposition, then there is no being. When becoming dies completely, then there's being. But this being is not static; it's not acceptance nor is it mere denial; becoming involves time and space. All striving must cease; then only there is being. Being is not within the field of social virtue and morality. It shatters the social formula of life. This being is life, not the pattern of life. Where life is*

there's no perfection; perfection is an idea, a word; life, the being, is beyond any formula of thought. It is there when the word, the example, and the pattern are destroyed."[36]

The expansion of consciousness is not solely the domain of the mind, but rather emerges from the harmonious integration of both the heart and the mind. K and Buddha recognized that the mind, while essential for understanding and insight, is not sufficient on its own to foster the full awakening or realization of the greater Self. K, in particular, emphasized that consciousness is a dynamic and multidimensional process, involving more than just intellectual thought or analytical reasoning. For consciousness to truly expand, the heart must also be engaged (Krishnamurti, *Can Humanity Change?* 195). This union of heart and mind allows for a more integrated perception of reality, one that transcends mere mental constructs and embraces a deeper sense of connectedness and understanding. In this way, consciousness is not merely the result of cognitive function but is a total experience that integrates intellect, emotion, and presence. The mind must work in congruence with the heart to open the way for the realization of the greater Self, a state that encompasses both wisdom and compassion as described by Buddhist scholar, Christmas Humphreys:

"*No man achieves the Path of self-dominion until in his heart the flame of compassion, the 'Wisdom-heart' of the Buddha, has been kindled, and the height and the depth of a man's enlightenment is measured by that flame. A kindly man may feel for his fellow men benevolence; he who would enter the Path must feel and know that he and they are One… 'The first step is to live to benefit mankind.'*

It has been said that all serve self, but the measure of a man's enlightenment is the size of the self he serves. Man in his youth is a slave to the personality. As he grows, he serves the mind, his proudly built-up character, but finally he sees the Self. Thereafter he strains to enlarge the limits of his being to make room for all mankind, and learns by bitter suffering that progress is the courage to let go. Little by little the hands of self are emptied and the empty corners of compassion filled. As the veils of the not-Self fall away, the veils of the Self fall too until, the burden of all self-hood laid aside…"[37]

The Art of Listening

Right Speech is one of the eight divisions of the Noble Eightfold Path. This division applies equally to listening as it does to speaking. Listening was profoundly important during the time of Buddha since the teachings were transmitted orally. Listening seems to be a skill that must be consciously developed, as it becomes corrupted with age and over time especially with regards to fragmentation of thought. Listening involves overcoming the ego's tendency to seek attention and the impulse to dominate conversations. While speaking is about articulating words to express meaning, listening requires us to be fully attuned to the words being spoken and our mental reactions / responses to those words. Effective communication, therefore, is a dynamic process that involves both speaking and listening in order to convey ideas, emotions, instructions, desires, and other essential human exchanges. This makes listening a crucial aspect of human connection.

When Buddha spoke of Right Speech, he was emphasizing the importance of both skillful speech and attentive listening, recognizing that both are essential to meaningful communication. In fact, listening was considered so important that Buddha feared that over

time the teachings could be misconstrued, altered and/or otherwise vanish into obscurity and often prefaced a discourse with the following statement: "*Listen and attend carefully to what I shall say*" (Nānamoli, 1992). Another example comes from the *Samyutta Nikaya*:

"*Once upon a time, monks, the Dasarahas had a kettle-drum called Summoner. As it began to split, the Dasarahas fixed in ever another peg, until the time came when the Summoner's original drumhead had vanished and only the framework of pegs remained. Even so, monks, will the monks come to be in the future. Those discourses spoken by the Truth-finder, deep, deep in meaning, other-worldly, dealing with emptiness - to these they will not listen as they are being spoken, they will not lend ear, they will not predispose their thoughts to profound knowledge, and they will not hold that these are teachings that should be learnt and mastered.*

But, monks, those discourses which are made by poets, which are poetry, which are a manifold of words and phrases, alien, the utterances of disciples – to these they will listen as are being spoken and will hold that these are the teachings that should be learnt and mastered. Thus it is that the discourses spoken by the Truth-finder, deep, deep in meaning, other-worldly, dealing with emptiness, will come to vanish."[38]

Many factors contribute to the difficulty of listening attentively, both externally and internally. Distractions, such as a noisy environment or an overactive, restless mind filled with looping thoughts, worries, or stress (which K would refer to as the "chattering mind"), can significantly impair one's ability to focus. Emotional dysregulation including anger, frustration, or hurt can also make it challenging to listen effectively. Additionally, feeling overwhelmed, tired, or mentally drained, as well as holding pre-existing biases or opinions, can interfere with our attention span. A lack of interest in the topic or subject matter, and differences in cultural or cognitive processing/programming, also play a role. Early childhood conditioning is another key factor that shapes our listening skills. From a young age, we are influenced by our families, schools, and social environments, all of which condition us to adopt certain listening habits and communication patterns. These formative experiences shape how we listen, how we process information, and how we respond in conversations as adults.

In the *Anguttara Nikaya*, Buddha expounded on the three types of listeners in this world:

"*Then the Exalted One said: 'Brethren, there are these three sorts of people to be found in the world:*
The empty-head, the fool who cannot see, -
Tho' oft and oft unto the Brethren going,
He hears their talk, beginning, middle, end, -
Can never grasp it. Wisdom is not his.

Better than he the man of scattered brains,
Who oft and oft unto the Brethren going
Hears all their talk, beginning, middle, end,
And seated there can grasp the very words,
Yet, rising, nought retains. Blank is his mind.

Better than these the man of wisdom wide.

He, oft and oft unto the Brethren going,
Hears all their talk, beginning, middle, end,
And, seated there, can grasp the very words,
Bears all in mind, steadfast, unwavering,
Skilled in the Norm and what conforms thereto.
This is the man to make an end of Ill.'"[39]

Listening was also a vital component of K's talks and dialogues. Consider this excerpt from the dialogue "Is There a State of Mind without the Self" between K, Buddhist Scholars Walpola Rahula and Irmgard Schoegl, Professor David Bohm, and others:

"*K: So, when one listens, am I listening to identify myself with that fact about which he is talking or is there no identification at all, and therefore I am capable of listening with a totally different ear? Am I hearing just with my ears, or am I hearing with total attention? You understand, sir? Am I listening with total attention? Or is my mind wandering off and saying, "Oh my goodness, this is rather boring, and what is he or she talking about?" – and so I am off. But can I attend so completely that there is only the act of listening and nothing else, no identification, no saying, "Yes, that's a good idea, that's a bad idea, that's true, that's false," which are all processes of identification. Can I listen without any of those movements? When I do so listen, then what? The truth that thought is the essence of the self, and the self creates all this misery, is finished. I don't have to meditate, I don't have to practice, all that is over because I see the danger of this thing. So can we listen so completely that there is the absence of the self?"*[40]

How does one listen so completely that there is an absence of the self? Think of an athlete or an artist who is so immersed in the task at hand that they literally unify or become one with what they are doing in the moment. During these fleeting moments in our lives, we can experience what it feels like when the self is temporarily taken offline and all one's attention is focused on a specific task; no internal dialogue is taking place, thought is completely silent. In the Buddhist tradition, certain meditations also aim to assist the practitioner in having a similar experience where presence and engagement with a certain activity (e.g., feeding a pet, walking in nature, etc.) temporarily over-rides the chattering mind. In the moments that we experience ourselves outside of thought, we are able to achieve glimpses of who and what we truly are beyond the constraints of our physical body. We might have an experience of our true essence, our Buddha nature. The quality of attention K is referring to when he speaks of the art of listening is one of total attention where one is listening with their entire being. However, he also cautions us to be aware of a function of mind he refers to as "the screen of resistance" that presents our greatest challenge when listening with one's full attention:

"*There is an art of listening. To be able really to listen, one should abandon or put aside all prejudices, pre-formulations and daily activities. When you are in a receptive state of mind, things can be easily understood; you are listening when your real attention is given to something. But unfortunately most of us listen through a screen of resistance. We are screened with prejudices, whether religious or spiritual, psychological or scientific; or with our daily worries, desires and fears. And with these for a screen, we listen. Therefore, we listen really to our own noise, to our own sound, not to what is being said. It is extremely difficult to put aside our training, our prejudices, our inclination, our resistance, and, reaching beyond the verbal expression, to listen so that we understand instantaneously. That is going to*

be one of our difficulties. If, during this discourse, anything is said which is opposed to your way of thinking and belief, just listen; do not resist. You may be right, and I may be wrong; but by listening and considering together we are going to find out what is the truth."[41]

Notes

[1] Luytens, *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti*, 65.
[2] Krishnamurti, *Krishnamurti's Notebook*, 188-189.
[3] Retrieved from http://www.jkrishnamurti.org/content/chapter-54-if-you-hurt-nature-you-are-hurting-yourself
[4] Woodward, *Some Sayings of the Buddha*. 26.
[5] Krishnamurti, *The First and Last Freedom*, 55.
[6] Krishnamurti, *Verbatim Report, Krishnamurti's Talks, Banaras, 1949-1950*, 38.
[7] Luytens, *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti*, 144.
[8] Humphreys, *Studies in the Middle Way: Being Thoughts on Buddhism Applied*, 21.
[9] Dikshit, *Sermons and Sayings of the Buddha*, 65.
[10] *Ibid.*, 94-95.
[11] Conze, *Buddhism*, 16.
[12] *Ibid.*, 18-19.
[13] Carus, *Gospel of the Buddha*, 41-42.
[14] Krishnamurti. *Can Humanity Change? J. Krishnamurti in Dialogue with Buddhists*, 33.
[15] Coomaraswamy & Horner, *Gotama the Buddha*, 161.
[16] Krishnamurti, *Commentaries on Living*, 6.
[17] Krishnamurti, *The First and Last Freedom*, 113.
[18] Wheelis, *The Scheme of Things*, 69.
[19] Wodehouse, A. E. (1931, February). Life and the Ego: Notes of Talks with Krishnamurti. *ISB*, No. 2, 18-19.
[20] *Ibid.*, 17.
[21] *Ibid.*, 21-22.
[22] Krishnamurti, *Discussions with Krishnamurti in Europe, 1966*, 17.
[23] Epstein, *Thoughts Without a Thinker – Psychotherapy from a Buddhist Perspective*, 116.
[24] Rechtshaffer, Ira. "*The Awakened Mind: A Comparative Study of J. Krishnamurti, Chogyam Trungpa Rimpoche and Bubba Free John.*" [Doctoral dissertation, California Institute of Integral Studies, 1977], p. 68.
[25] Coomaraswamy & Horner, *Gotama the Buddha*, 19.
[26] Carus, *Gospel of the Buddha*, 43.
[27] Humphreys, *Studies in the Middle Way: Being Thoughts on Buddhism Applied*, 60.
[28] Krishnamurti, *Early Writings, Volume IV*. 10-11.
[29] Krishnamurti, *The World Within: You Are the Story of Humanity*, 186.
[30] Woodward, *Some Sayings of the Buddha*, 321.
[31] Humphreys, *Buddhism*, 21.
[32] Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5WMzoK6IpY, Brockwood Park 1982 - Question #3 from Question & Answer Meeting #2
[33] Retrieved from: https://www.jkrishnamurti.org/content/madras-4th-public-talk-13th-january-1952
[34] Krishnamurti, *The First and Last Freedom*, 223-224.
[35] Krishnamurti, *You Are the World*, 42.
[36] Krishnamurti, *Krishnamurti's Notebook*, 71-72.
[37] Humphreys, *Studies in the Middle Way: Being Thoughts on Buddhism Applied*, 52.
[38] Coomaraswamy & Horner, *Gotama the Buddha*, 50.
[39] Woodward, *Some Sayings of the Buddha*, 171.
[40] Krishnamurti. *Can Humanity Change? J. Krishnamurti in Dialogue with Buddhists*, 44.
[41] Krishnamurti, *The First and Last Freedom*, 19-20.

Part Six: Differences in the Teachings

Different Times, Different People

Two of the most significant differences between the teachings of Buddha and K lie in the time periods during which they taught and their perspectives on the role of psychological time in personal transformation. A monk or nun living 2,500 years ago in India or Nepal would have encountered a world vastly different from the one experienced by K's audiences up until his death in 1986, and even more so compared to the world we live in today. The environments, challenges, and pressures of each era were vastly different as well as the resources available to the average person. This disparity is crucial to understanding the scope and relevance of their teachings. The audience that Buddha addressed lived in an era where life was much simpler, more predictable, and more grounded in meeting basic survival needs. People were not burdened by cultural shifts, complexities in daily living, and the intricacies and responsibilities that define modern society. Their challenges, while real, were more focused on personal, social, and existential issues within a context of spiritual awakening. Technology, for instance, had not yet begun to influence human existence in the way it does today.

Fast forward to the 20th century, and we find ourselves in a world shaped by technological revolutions, global connectivity through the internet, and increasingly powerful forces of addiction, both physical and psychological. From the time of K's teachings to the present day, the rapid advancement of technology has transformed the landscape in ways unimaginable to Buddha's contemporaries. We live in an age dominated by digital distractions, social media overload, virtual realities, and an overwhelming flood of information, much of which only contributes to a sense of disconnection, confusion, and anxiety. Modern humans are now confronted with an array of challenges that were entirely absent in the time of the Buddha. The rise of more potent and pervasive forms of addiction from substances to digital media are at unprecedented levels. Geopolitical divisions, which seem to widen every year, bring with them a sense of instability and looming conflict, with the threat of war hanging over many regions. In addition, the global economic system, driven by fiat currencies, faces a tipping point as the very structure of our financial systems appears fragile and unsustainable. We are left with an undeniable longing, an urgency for change, amongst those of us who wish to live in peace with one another.

Unlike the world of the Buddha, where life was marked by fewer distractions and more opportunities for spiritual growth, the modern world seems to be drowning in constant noise, distractions, and pressures. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the soil we live on, and even the food we eat are all tainted by pollution and toxicity. With an overwhelming reliance on an allopathic medical system that often treats symptoms rather than addressing root causes and the whole person, it is clear that the modern human is unhealthier (i.e., physically, mentally, and spiritually) than ever before. In today's world, ideals such as autonomy, sovereignty, and the drive towards individuation seem to be gradually eroding with an overwhelming dependence on external authorities. We seem increasingly caught in the web of external control, manipulation, and systemic forces that are seemingly out of our control.

The existential crisis we face is not just about survival but about the very essence of human freedom and personal agency. The future, for many, feels uncertain, marked by an overwhelming sense of fear and confusion as well as a lack of meaning and purpose in life.

This state of fear, uncertainty, and divisiveness has led to rising levels of conflict and violence. Hatred seems more prevalent than ever before, and the division between individuals, groups, and nations has never been more pronounced. It is a world that feels like it is on the brink of collapse, we cannot help but wonder if humanity has passed the point of no return, or is there still a way forward? The challenges we face today, both external and internal, have a profound effect on our physical, mental, and psychological functioning. People caught in this web of fear and distraction struggle to make clear, conscious choices, unable to see the world for what it truly is. Instead of clarity and insight, we are left with confusion and fragmentation. We find ourselves in a crisis of consciousness.

Time & Transformation

Another significant difference between the teachings of the Buddha and K centers around the concept of psychological time. This is a fundamental point of divergence between the teachings of both men. It touches on the very nature of personal transformation and the path to spiritual awakening. As we have seen throughout this exploration, Buddhism favors a gradual, incremental approach to change, rooted in the idea that growth, both spiritual and psychological, requires sustained effort, discipline, and long-term practice. This view is grounded in the understanding that awareness and wisdom unfold over time as one cultivates mindfulness, discernment, and ethical living - that through consistent practice, an individual slowly shapes their mind, behavior, and understanding of the world in a more positive, sustainable direction. However, from the book, *Studies in the Middle Way*, Christmas Humphreys indicates that perhaps the Buddhists also viewed time as an illusion. Consider the following quote:

> "*This noble pilgrimage, from Here to There, from the fact to the realization of Enlightenment, takes place within the illusion of our consciousness called time, and the details of this aspect of the journey form the doctrine of re-birth.*"[1]

In Buddhist thought, psychological time appears to play a pivotal role in personal transformation. Based on the quote above, this may not be entirely true but for the sake of this project, we will proceed with the familiar concept that gradual change aligns with the belief that inner transformation happens incrementally. The wisdom contained in the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path offer guidance to the practitioner through the cultivation of various modes of living such as Right Intentions, Right Speech, Right Meditation, and so on. The idea is that through sustained effort and commitment, one eventually reaches a state of enlightenment. However, this requires patience, persistence, and an understanding that deep change is often slow and painstaking. In contrast, K rejects the notion of psychological time and in particular the idea that transformation is something that occurs gradually. Instead, he insists that change can happen instantaneously, in the now, through deep self-observation and insight. For K, the key to change lies in immediate, unwavering perception of self and the movement of thought, the movement of life, and the movement of sorrow. He insists that

when one truly sees the destructive nature of their thoughts, their conditioning, and the patterns of their mind, it is possible to break free from them in an instant. In 1983, during an interview with television broadcaster, Keith Berwick, K made the statement: "*If you see something very clearly, that some things are utterly destructive, you walk away from it. You see, the idea of renouncing and sacrifice and conflict never existed.*"[2] According to K, the moment of true insight is not something that unfolds over days, months, or years, but rather a singular, transformative moment when the mind sees clearly through right perception that an idea, thought, behavior, etc. is not serving one.

K's teaching places a heavy emphasis on the power of self-observation without judgment. Through this deep awareness of the present moment, a person can experience a profound shift in consciousness. This shift does not rely on gradual progress but on the sudden and total understanding of the self; this awareness allows for immediate liberation from the psychological constraints that bind us. This contrast between the teachings regarding psychological time brings us to the heart of two different approaches to human transformation. Buddhism's focus on gradual change suggests that the path to awakening is a long one, requiring steady, methodical work. It is about refining the mind through continuous effort, developing the right habits, and slowly dissolving attachments and ignorance. It is a path that requires patience and a deep understanding of the role that time plays in personal growth.

K, however, challenges the necessity of effort as well as the notion of time in the process of transformation. He explained that time itself is a mental construct that prevents true freedom. By seeing the totality of one's thoughts and actions in the present moment, a person can realize their true nature and experience a spontaneous and immediate shift in consciousness. For K, the idea of "gradual change" is a concept that reinforces the cycle of psychological time, perpetuating the illusion that we are separate from the immediate reality of who we are and that we need to "become" someone we are not. True change, for K, does not come from years of practice or disciplined effort, but from a moment of profound insight that occurs when the mind is completely aware of its own conditioning. According to K:

> "*Time exists when you do not understand. I am talking of truth in which time does not exist, and to understand that truth you have to live with intense awareness in the present, free from all incentives and beliefs.*"[3]

This philosophical difference between gradual change in Buddhism and immediate transformation in K's teachings has profound implications for how we understand personal development. Buddhism suggests that we are in a continuous process of becoming, where time is an ally, allowing for deep, reflective growth. K, in contrast, asks us to break free from the constraints of time and realize that change is not something that comes later, but something that can happen in the very instant we choose to see ourselves clearly. In a sense, we are already the person we wish to become. However, because of the fragmentation in our thinking and years of conditioning, desire and image-making, we cannot connect with our inherent divinity, the "Self," that resides within each and every one of us.

Notes

[1] Humphreys, *Studies in the Middle Way*, 76.
[2] Retrieved from: https://kfoundation.org/urgency-of-change-podcast-episode-22-krishnamurti-with-keith-berwick-2/
[3] Krishnamurti, J. (1933, May-June). Talks in the Oak Grove, Ojai. *ISB*, Vol. 3, 107.

Part Seven: The Noble Pathless Path

The Eightfold Path from K's Perspective

Buddha's Four Truths and Eightfold Path are considered "noble" stemming from the universality of the teachings. Both Buddha and K's teachings are accessible to all regardless of nationality, race, religious affiliation, gender, economic status, etc. representing profound and essential truths related to the end of ignorance and of suffering. Together, these truths are considered "noble" because they reflect deep insights into the nature of existence and provide wisdom that is not superficial but profound, transformative, and capable of leading one to a state of awakening or enlightenment. The word "noble" as defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary relates to the possession of outstanding qualities or properties as well as possessing, characterized by, or arising from superiority of mind or character or of ideals or morals. In his book, *Krishnamurti: Two Birds on One Tree*, Dr. Ravi Ravindra described his final meeting with K in 1985 in Ojai, California. The two men spoke at length on the topic of death. At the conclusion of their meeting, K held the door open for Dr. Ravindra while he prepared to leave: "*When I was leaving he [K] came to the door and held it open. He looked a little frail, and I did not want him to stand there waiting while I put on my socks and shoes, which I had taken off at the entrance. My heart had been filled by what he had said, and I was taking my leave slowly. When I said again that he should go in and not wait there, he said, 'The noble never close the door.'*"[1]

We are fortunate to have access to a variety of historical and contemporary interpretations of the Eightfold Path, drawn from different sources. However, understanding how K might view this path presents a distinct challenge, as he outright rejected the necessity of any prescribed path being universally useful in his famous speech, "Truth is a Pathless Land." For K, the Eightfold Path would never have been seen as a linear progression but perhaps as a manifestation of what he referred to as the *Inner Revolution* - a profound transformation of the mind. He might describe the Eightfold Path as insight into the elements that represent a mind freed from the automatic functioning driven by thought and desires, evolving into one that is fully liberated from conditioning.

Unlike his former mentor, Annie Besant, who viewed the divisions of the Eightfold Path as steps on a journey toward enlightenment, K would not regard the Middle Way as a formula where each element or division builds upon the last. Instead, he would likely see it as the natural expression of a mind unburdened by conditioning, inner conflict, and fragmentation. K never advocated for rigid precepts, rules, or moral obligations, so he might suggest that the Eightfold Path represents a "pathless path" - a guide not to be followed in the conventional sense, but to be understood. It would be less of a roadmap to follow and more of a means of understanding one's own psychological structures. In this regard, the Eightfold Path could be viewed as an organic outcome of deep self-awareness, grounded in direct experience rather than intellectual abstraction. Ultimately, K had many doubts about Buddhism in general. In dialogue with Pupul Jayakar, later published in her book, *Fire in the Mind*, he made the bold statement, *"Nobody listened to him; that is why there is Buddhism."*[2]

Most contemporary Buddhists today also do not approach the Eightfold Path as a strict, sequential journey. Instead, they understand that all divisions of the path are interconnected aspects of a fully engaged life, grounded in the Buddha's fundamental wisdom. These aspects do not follow a strict hierarchy but are integral to the wholeness of life and are always important at all times. K might resonate with this holistic view, seeing the path as an outcome of living a life of deep awareness, free from the limitations of conditioned thought and behavior.

K viewed liberation from suffering not as some distant goal, but as a realization accessible to anyone willing to practice self-honesty and deep self-observation in the present moment. The "Self" he spoke of in his early writings appears to be accessible within us all, though it is obscured by layers of conditioning, fragmented thinking, unwholesome desires, our resistance to letting go of the known and our own personal self-deceptions. He argued that no specific practice or discipline is needed to achieve awareness of "what is" or to transcend the small "self," but rather a return to innocence, curiosity, and a willingness or intention to evolve. Both Buddha and K suggest the "Self" is not separate from us; it may simply be something we avoid because it challenges everything the known world has taught us. Courage to allow the known in our lives to end could be key to ending suffering and answering fundamental questions about life. Consider this excerpt from K's, *The Way of Intelligence*, 1st Seminar Madras, "The Nature of a Religious Life:"

"*K: Freedom from the known can only take place when one has observed the whole phenomenon of working in the field of the known. Then, in the very investigation of the known, from that comes freedom from the known. It is not the other way round.*

Pupul Jayakar: What is the nature of this insight?

K: I say, the nature of this insight is freedom from the known first, which implies no remembrances of the past. It is not a state of amnesia; it is complete, total attention in which there is no memory operating, no experience operating.

David Shainberg: Sir, the movement that I come upon is the tangle of a movement of registration; it is the movement of memory. You will register it if you are attached.

K: I have an image about myself and you come along and insult me, and that is immediately registered. If I have no image, you can call me anything you like."[3]

In this example, we can clearly see how the "self" becomes the primary obstacle to observing "what is" in the present moment. The "self" is not just a simple sense of identity; it is heavily influenced by the accumulation of ideas, facts, and knowledge over time, all of which are stored in memory. The mind continuously collects and organizes experiences, data, conclusions, and judgments, creating a complex mental archive. This accumulation serves to reinforce the ego or "self," offering a false sense of stability and security. It creates the illusion of certainty by continually referencing past experiences and knowledge to make sense of the present.

However, according to K, true learning is not about accumulating facts or information - what he refers to as "knowledge." Knowledge, he argues, is a product of thought, and as such, it is static, fixed, and disconnected from the fluid, ever-changing nature of the present moment. True learning can only happen when the mind is free from the constant chatter of thoughts, judgments, and memories. It occurs when we can listen attentively with our whole being, when we can observe our own mental processes without the interference of past conditioning or mental noise. In this state of inner quiet, without the filter of self-images or preconceived notions, learning becomes a direct, fresh engagement with "what is" in the moment, untainted by the past. Only in this state of pure observation can one access true insight and understanding. K expanded upon his understanding of knowledge and insight in dialogue with Pupul Jayakar (PJ) in *Exploration into Insight*:

"*K: We asked, what is learning? Either you accumulate knowledge to act, or you go out, act, and learn. Therefore it is acting according to knowledge. So knowledge becomes the authority, whether it is of the doctor, the scientist, the architect, anybody. The guru says, 'I know', which is his authority. Now, somebody comes along and says, 'Look, that acting according to knowledge is a prison, you will never be free in that. You can't ascend through knowledge.' …Knowledge then becomes mechanical. Somebody like K comes along and says: 'Look at it differently. Look at action as insight. Not accumulate knowledge and act, but insight, action.' In that there is no authority.*

PJ: You have used the word insight. What is the actual nature of that word?

K: To have sight in, to grasp something instantly. This man says, 'Listen carefully.' You don't listen, that's all my point. You act, and after learning act. That is, there is accumulation of information, knowledge, and acting according to that knowledge, skillfully or non-skillfully. That is learning, that is the accumulating of knowledge and acting. The other is, going out, acting, learning, which is the same as the other. Both are acting on the basis of knowledge. So knowledge becomes the authority. So where there is authority, there must be suppression and so on. So he says you will never ascend anywhere through that process; it is mechanical. He says that. Now, do you see both, the whole of it, as a mechanical movement? If you see that, that is insight. Therefore you are not acting from knowledge but seeing the implications of knowledge, authority, all that, and acting totally differently."[4]

Throughout his talks, dialogues, and gatherings, K's central aim was to encourage his audience to question everything he said, never accepting his ideas as absolute truth. He was not interested in having people simply absorb his words, memorize his teachings, or treat them as doctrines to follow. Instead, K hoped to inspire listeners to have their own personal insights - insights that arose not from intellectual agreement with his ideas but from a deep, direct engagement with their own lives and experiences. His intention was not for the audience to passively receive information, but to apply what they heard to their own self-reflection and daily living, thereby creating a new form of awareness, one that was uniquely their own.

"*Do you know what it means to learn? When you are really learning, you are learning throughout your life, and there is no one special teacher to learn from. Then everything teaches you – a dead leaf, a bird in flight, a smell, a tear, the rich and the poor, those who are crying, the smile of a woman, the*

haughtiness of a man. You learn from everything; there is no guide, no philosopher, no guru. Life itself is your teacher, and you are in a state of constant learning."[5]

K often emphasized the importance of truly paying attention and listening with one's entire being. This is why he frequently asked the audience: "Are you learning, or are you having an 'insight' into it?" The distinction was crucial to his teaching. For K, insight was not a gradual process of learning or acquiring knowledge over time. Unlike the process of mastering a skill or learning something that requires practice, such as a new musical instrument, insight happens instantaneously. It arises in a moment of deep clarity, independent of time, effort, or gradual accumulation of facts. Insight is not something one "learns," it is a sudden and direct understanding that transcends the intellect and brings a new awareness into being. This form of insight does not require discipline or practice - it is, in a sense, immediate and unmediated by the structures of thought or past knowledge. Similarly, when Buddha delivered his First Sermon to the five Bhikkhus, Kondanna, the most senior of the group, immediately attained enlightenment upon hearing Buddha's sermon. Kondanna had insight into the words and messages he heard. The other Bhikkhus, reached the same insight for themselves each, independently, several days later (Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha*, 55).

In the opening quote of this work, from *K's Early Writings, Volume IV* (1971), K reflected on what he understood to be the purpose of life: "*to make the Self rich and harmonious.*" He spoke of a way of being that leads to the cessation of suffering, a path where life is transformed into a source of richness and harmony through realization of the Self - an enduring, guiding force always within our reach. But how do we achieve this harmony within ourselves? For K, the answer lies in following our hearts, quieting the mind, applying self-observation, and reconnecting with the natural world. It involves transcending our petty, robotic habits and embracing a higher way of living - one that is in service to the interconnectedness of all beings. It is a way of being *of* the world, but not *in* it; stepping out of the ignorance and confusion of the status quo.

No one can undertake this vital inner work for us. There is no savior coming to rescue us. There is no step-by-step guidebook, no formula, or protocol that guarantees a well-lived, abundant life. The transformation is entirely up to us. We must be willing to say, "I am ready and willing to change - I see the suffering in my life and in the world, and I want to put an end to it." K was adamant that true revolutions begin with individual, personal change. In this spirit, what follows is an imaginative attempt to reframe the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path through K's lens, based on his decades of public speaking. This interpretation of the Middle Way may serve as inspiration on our personal journey toward a life free from suffering.

Right Views & Right Aims

Clear Understanding

The first two elements of this *Pathless Path* (Right Views and Right Aims) apply to wisdom, insight, and intelligence. In the Buddha's rendition of these first two elements, a central theme related to Right Views is the clear understanding of Buddha's Four Noble Truths:

- Suffering is pervasive throughout life.
- Suffering results from ignorant, selfish desires as well as attachment to the "self."
- The cure resides in the removal of the cause.
- The Noble Eightfold Path which leads to the end of suffering is the cure.

K also prefaced a great many of his talks and dialogues speaking on the problem of suffering (more commonly referred to as sorrow) as it was his aim to help people realize an end to suffering in one's lifetime, to live with a greater sense of peace and harmony. From the book, *The Urgency of Change*, K outlined the causes and the cure to the problem of suffering:

"*There is the personal sorrow and the sorrow of the world. There is the sorrow of ignorance and the sorrow of time. This ignorance is the lack of knowing oneself, and the sorrow of time is the deception that time can cure, heal and change. Most people are caught in that deception and either worship sorrow or explain it away. But in either case it continues, and one never asks oneself if it can come to an end.*

Self-pity is one of the elements of sorrow. Another element is being attached to someone and encouraging or fostering his attachment to you. Sorrow is not only there when attachment fails you but its seed is in the very beginning of that attachment. In all this the trouble is the utter lack of knowing oneself. Knowing oneself is the ending of sorrow. We are afraid to know ourselves because we have divided ourselves into the good and the bad, the evil and the noble, the pure and the impure. The good is always judging the bad, and these fragments are at war with each other.

This war is sorrow. To end sorrow is to see the fact and not invent its opposite, for the opposites contain each other. Walking in this corridor of opposites is sorrow. This fragmentation of life into the high and the low, the noble and the ignoble, God and the Devil, breeds conflict and pain. When there is sorrow, there is no love. Love and sorrow cannot live together."[6]

K's view of the human condition, as well as the causes of suffering, also include the following key points included in his teachings:

- Our minds are conditioned from birth onwards. Therefore, we never think; we recall some part of memory which dictates our actions.

- The observer is the observed; there is no "I" so to speak, only self-conscious awareness.

- We are in a state of internal conflict because we have no understanding of the "self" which is responsible for this problem either in part or wholly; our inner conflicts are then projected outwards into the collective.

- We never listen, or if we do, we listen through a "screen of resistance"[7] therefore we only really listen to our own internal dialogue and not to what is being said; we are unable to see without naming, labeling, or identifying - therefore we speak without awareness and from a place of fragmentation based in the past.

- We are incapable of taking conscious action because our memory and fragmented mental processes are, for the most part, automatic, mechanical, repetitive, and robotic; we operate in a state of self-hypnosis (i.e., trance) incapable of taking conscious action.

- We waste a tremendous amount of energy being in a constant state of analysis, confusion, inner conflict, misery, competition, etc. oblivious to the energy available to us when we are aware of the whole movement of sorrow, the whole movement of life.

- We are not aware when thought creates an image that leads to desire which inevitably hurls us into the past or forward into the future; we are therefore never present to or capable of truly seeing and accepting the "what is" of any moment.

- We do not understand the interconnected of all beings, that "we are the world," therefore, we act not from love or compassion but from a place of self-centeredness and self-interest.

K was insistent on the idea that the suffering of any individual, regardless of their circumstances, must be understood as a reflection of the universal human condition. He emphasized that the plight of one person is not isolated but deeply interconnected with the plight of humanity as a whole. Whether we are men or women, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, citizens of different nations or cultures, or shaped by diverse upbringings and personal histories, the fundamental issue of human suffering transcends these differences. This suffering, in all its forms - whether it manifests as physical pain, emotional distress, psychological turmoil, or existential despair - is a shared experience.

For K, this was a direct call to action and awareness. He argued that the awareness of our common humanity, the recognition that the struggle to end suffering is a collective one, must be at the heart of our understanding. The notion that all human beings, no matter their background or circumstances, are bound by the same fundamental psychological suffering creates a deep sense of inclusivity in the human experience. This aligns with the Buddha's First Noble Truth, which asserts that suffering is omnipresent - it affects everyone, everywhere, without exception.

By recognizing that suffering is universal, K also urged a deeper understanding of the root causes of suffering - not as isolated personal struggles, but as symptoms of broader systemic issues, such as conditioning, desire, fear, attachment, and conflict. For K, this awareness was not about sympathy or pity but about seeing that the problem of suffering is not external to us but intrinsic to the very structure of the human mind. The suffering of another is not an abstract or distant issue, but a reflection of the suffering within us. To truly address it, we must begin by understanding the structure and function of our own minds. We must come to know ourselves deeply and honestly.

K's message was not just one of empathy, but of radical inclusivity: the realization that ending suffering is a task that concerns all of humanity, not just individuals or specific groups. It calls for a global, collective awareness that transcends the boundaries of nationality, class, and identity. Only through such a holistic understanding of suffering and its causes can we begin

to address the deeper, more pervasive forms of psychological and social distress that shape our world.

Harmony of Intention

According to K, we begin our inward journey through our intention and willingness to know ourselves through a journey of self-inquiry. It out of this very intention and through the desire to truly know oneself that a certain vitality and energy emerge to assist us on our quest for greater self-understanding.

"*What brings about understanding is self-knowledge, and it is not very difficult to be aware if there is right intention. If you are interested to discover the whole process of yourself - not merely the superficial part but the total process of your whole being - then it is comparatively easy. If you really want to know yourself, you will search out your heart and your mind to know their full content and when there is the intention to know, you will know. Then you can follow, without condemnation or justification, every movement of thought and feeling; by following every thought and every feeling as it arises you bring about tranquillity which is not compelled, not regimented, but which is the outcome of having no problem, no contradiction. It is like the pool that becomes peaceful, quiet, any evening when there is no wind; when the mind is still, then that which is immeasurable comes into being.*"[8]

Our journey toward self-knowledge unfolds within the context of our relationships – with people, situations, and ideas - in various areas of life, such as intimate encounters, work, and society. In every moment, our mind is bombarded with vast amounts of information and sensory data that it must process and respond to. How we react to these stimuli offers a crucial opportunity for self-understanding, but only if we can observe ourselves as we truly are in the present moment, rather than through the lens of how we wish to be seen or how we imagine ourselves. For this kind of honest self-observation to occur, the mind must be still, free from the noise of incessant chatter, conditioned responses, and ingrained beliefs. Only when the mind is quiet and clear can we perceive the moment without distortion - without the filters of past experiences, biases, or preconceived notions. In this state of unclouded awareness, we gain a genuine opportunity for self-discovery and insight.

This process requires a sincere commitment to transformation: a deep, authentic desire to confront the uncomfortable truths about ourselves. It calls for a willingness to see beyond the self-image(s) we often protect and to embrace the reality of our own limitations and contradictions. Once we set this intention in motion, the next step is to observe our own mind, attentively and without judgment, gaining insight into the way we think, feel, and respond in different situations. Through this careful and consistent self-observation, we begin to unravel the layers of conditioning and illusion, gradually coming to a deeper, more truthful understanding of who we really are. K referred to this ability to observe ourselves without judgement as the highest form of intelligence.

"*Self-knowledge is the beginning of wisdom, and therefore the beginning of transformation or regeneration. To understand oneself there must be the intention to understand - and that is where our difficulty comes in… it is important to discover these things for ourselves, because self-knowledge cannot be given to us by another, it is not to be found through any book. We must discover, and to discover*

there must be the intention, the search, the inquiry. So long as that intention to find out, to inquire deeply, is weak or does not exist, mere assertion or a casual wish to find out about oneself is of very little significance.

Thus the transformation of the world is brought about by the transformation of oneself, because the self is the product and a part of the total process of human existence. To transform oneself, self-knowledge is essential; without knowing what you are, there is no basis for right thought, and without knowing yourself there cannot be transformation."[9]

Right Speech, Right Conduct & Right Occupation

Insightful Speech & Deep Listening

The second three divisions of this *Pathless Path* (Right Speech, Right Conduct and Right Occupation) apply to personal integrity, purity of action, and ethical living. It is here that we begin to experience the integral aspects inherent in the Noble Eightfold Path for the correct understanding of Right Speech, Right Conduct and Right Occupation are intimately related to the final three divisions of this *Pathless Path* – Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Contemplation. Right Speech requires speaking with awareness, free from the distortions of thought and self-interest. This means our words arise from a place of genuine understanding or curiosity rather than from habitual or conditioned responses. It requires us to be mindful of both the words we choose and the reasons behind our choices. We are invited to examine our motives and intentions when we speak, striving for greater awareness in our communication. K acknowledged that our communication on the verbal level is necessary for us to understand each other, but it is what is said, how it is said, from where it is said that is most fundamentally important to effectively speak with awareness – suggesting a deeper quality of communication. (Mehta & Mehta, *J. Krishnamurti and Sant Kabir*, 32). True communication reflects speech born from a place of genuine perception and self-awareness where words are aligned with understanding and presence rather from conditioning, ego, or superficiality. As discussed earlier in ***Part Five: Parallels between Buddha & Krishnamurti***, insightful speech is intimately connected to the art of listening.

But what does Right Listening actually look like? To listen with one's whole being, it is crucial to set aside the "self" - the ego, the personal narratives, as well as any inner need for validation. If we do not, the unconscious processes of image-making and registration will take over, and we will likely listen not to truly understand, but to reinforce our own sense of security or identity. Only by setting aside these biases can we listen with true presence, allowing the other person's words to be received without distortion or agenda. Consider this excerpt from K's 9th Public Talk in Madras, February 2, 1952:

"*Are you listening to me at the verbal level or are you watching what I am saying with what is actually happening in your mental process? Are you merely responding to the verbal vibration or are you watching, which is a stimulation of what I am saying?*

If you are watching your own mind using me, using what I am saying, as a mirror and therefore observing, then what I am saying will be of extraordinary significance. But if you are merely listening,

then you are imitating; you are merely responding to the words; words create an image and the pursuit of that image is referred to as thinking, which is 'I', the 'me' stimulating you to observe. There fore that stimulation becomes weary, dull; but whereas if you observe your own thinking in relation to what I am saying, then you will discover whether your mind is merely repetitive or it is something beyond the mechanical quality of a machine."[10]

See also ***Part Five: Parallels between Buddha & Krishnamurti, The Art of Listening*** for additional information.

Intelligent Action & Right Perception

Intelligent action, often referred to as Right Conduct, Right Action, or Ethical Conduct in Buddhist texts, refers to behavior that emerges from a place of deep awareness and clear understanding rather than from impulse, habit, or mere reaction. It is a mindful and intentional way of being that reflects true insight into one's actions and their impact on the world. This contrasts with the reactive and often unexamined choices that arise from automatic responses shaped by past experiences and conditioning. When considering what Intelligent Action may look like, some of the factors to be considered are the movement of desire (linked to both thought and time), recognizing the role of fear and investigating ways of working with fear, investigating one's prior conditioning (from birth onwards) and the observation of internal and external conflicts which create division within oneself and others.

In today's fast-paced world, human lives are significantly more demanding than they were during the time when K was speaking globally until his death in 1986. Moreover, the lives of seekers in ancient times, 2,500 years ago, were considerably less complicated compared to the complexities and distractions of modern existence. Contemporary society is further challenged by the constant presence of advanced technology. While these tools offer incredible conveniences, they can also become sources of unrelenting distractions, distortions in mental clarity and addiction. When technology is used unskillfully, it can fragment attention, overwhelm the mind, and prevent one from achieving the inner stillness needed for wise action. Intelligent action, therefore, demands a quiet, focused mind - one that is not dominated by the habitual noise of past conditioning, societal ideologies, or constant technological bombardment. Intelligent action appears to be an integration of both wisdom and presence, allowing for genuine freedom in how one responds to life.

This capacity to act wisely depends greatly on one's perception - the ability to pay attention in a clear, unclouded manner, moment by moment. In our current age of heightened uncertainty, misinformation, and political turmoil, cultivating this level of perception is especially challenging. The constant influx of information, coupled with the instability of the world, makes it difficult to maintain clarity and focus. Yet, intelligent action calls us to navigate these times with discernment and integrity, rooted in self-awareness, and guided by ethical insight.

"*Perception itself is understanding and the true action emerges in the ground of perception – all else is mere reaction."*[11]

The Cambridge dictionary defines perception as "*the quality of being aware of things through the physical senses, especially sight.*" When K speaks about perception (or right seeing), he is referring to much more than our physical eyesight. The truth that K speaks of, which we must discover for ourselves, relies upon direct perception where no screen of resistance is present. He explained that the moment we begin to interpret, to judge or to attempt to translate or assign meaning to what we are seeing, we miss the truth entirely. Rohit and Shridevi Mehta expound on this topic of perception and seeing ever so eloquently in their book, *J. Krishnamurti and Sant Kabir*:

"*There is no doubt that right action will follow as naturally as night follows the day if there is the ground of right perception. The problem is fundamentally philosophical, or more truly psychological. Surprisingly, the approach both of Kabir and Krishnaji is not moral or so-called religious. It is the problem of perception. But here perception is not just the act of seeing or observing. As someone has rightly said - it is not the eye that sees, it is the mind that sees. It is the seeing by the mind that is discussed both by Kabir and Krishnaji. Perception is not a gradual process, spread over time. It is instantaneous. That which is perceived gradually is fragmented in the process - and a fragmented perception has no quality of wholeness in it. Life is a whole at any moment, everywhere, and so its perception has to have the quality of wholeness in it.*"[12]

The concept of speaking, listening, or seeing with one's whole being was not unique to K's teaching. Kriya Yoga guru and founder of The Self-Realization Fellowship, Paramahansa Yogananda, (1893-1952), stated in his book, *Autobiography of a Yogi*:

"*Wisdom is not assimilated with the eyes, but with the atoms… When your conviction of a truth is not merely in your brain, but in your being, you may diffidently vouch for its meaning.*"[13]

This quote is deeply connected to right perception as it suggests that true wisdom transcends the way we *see* the world with our eyes as well as the way we understand concepts on a superficial, intellectual level (as taught in many contemporary educational systems which teach students *what* to think instead of *how* to think). Perception, in its typical sense, is often limited to what we observe or reason with our senses and mind. It is often influenced by external inputs or knowledge we acquire through learning or observation. However, when one's conviction of a truth is so deep that it resonates throughout one's entire being - not just as a concept to be understood but as something one can live and embody - then one can truly speak about it with confidence. "*Diffidently vouch for its meaning*" indicates a type of wisdom that is humble and genuine as it is derived from personal experience and inner understanding rather than theoretical knowledge. In essence, wisdom comes from the actualization of one's unique internal truth, rather than just intellectually accepting something one had read or heard or learned in school. It's a kind of deep, lived knowledge that is reflected in everything one does, not just what one thinks.

From K's viewpoint, the mind itself is its own prison and the only means by which one can liberate oneself from this prison is to quiet all the activity of the mind. K referred to this state of being as "choiceless awareness." K was adamant that choice only exists within a mind that is confused, fragmented and that a mind operating from a place of stillness and clarity will

always engage direct perception and therefore, intelligent action (Krishnamurti, *That Benediction is Where You Are*, 20).

"*Choice exists only when there is confusion.*
When the mind is not confused there is no choice.
There is direct perception."[14]

Understanding Desire & Image-Making

From the February 1931 edition of International Star Bulletin: Talks, Writings, Poems by Krishnamurti:

"*I have lived the good and evil of men,*
And dark became the horizon of my love.

I have known the morality and immorality of men,
And cruel became my anxious thought.

I have shared in the piety and impiety of men,
And heavy became the burden of life.

I have pursued the race of the ambitious,
And vain became the glory of life.

And now I have fathomed the secret purpose of desire."[15]

Buddha addressed the topic of desire in his second Noble Truth which outlined the cause of suffering. As stated in ***Part Three: The Buddha's First Sermon, The Four Noble Truths***, suffering results from ignorant, selfish desires as well as one's attachment to the lower "self." The end of suffering, he explained, was contingent upon one's ability to observe the lower self and its attachments and to ultimately let go of all unwholesome desires. Buddha clearly stated that desire in and of itself is not evil. He was speaking directly about those desires which feed the lower self and its relentless thirst for safety and security. K also expressed concern about the issue of selfish, self-serving desire. During his 4th Public Talk in Ojai, California, May 11, 1980, he explained that the brain's primary drive is to seek security, whether that security is real or illusory, since the brain can only function "somewhat skillfully" when it feels secure. K identified a pattern he believed all of humanity is trapped in - a cycle that begins with thought/sensation leading to desire, then attachment which ultimately fuels greed, driven by fear. It seemed to K that this pattern was one people are unable to escape, overcome, or free themselves from. For example:

Thought > Sensation > Contact > Image Creation:

I see a dress in the shop window of a fashion store. I find the dress stunning, absolutely beautiful. This experience generates sensations in me of awe, excitement, and longing. I enter

the store and look more closely at the dress. I touch/contact the dress, feel the fabric and experience additional sensations of joy and happiness.

I then begin to see myself (imagine) wearing this beautiful dress. Thought has created an image in my mind of me wearing this dress (e.g., to my next social engagement, on a date, etc.). I feel ecstatic, elated. I now have an image of me wearing this dress registered in my mind - created by thought, sensation and finally, through contact in touching the dress, trying it on, etc.

Desire > Attachment > Greed:

From the image I have created of me wearing the dress, thoughts arise of how good I will look, how others might perceive me in this dress. Desire is born from the image I have created of me in this dress. I become attached to the image thought has created. From my attachment to the thought(s) of all that this dress can do for me, I am now thirsting, craving to own this dress. I ignore the fact that I have an entire closet at home full of dresses I rarely wear. The thought never occurs to me that I do not need another dress. I am engulfed in self-centered greed because the fear of not having the dress outweighs any kind of rational thinking by this stage in the cycle.

So, desire is born when thought creates an image. Then there is the seeing, sensation, and contact which ultimately leads thought to attach to this image. In my imagination I see myself walking out into the world wearing this gorgeous dress. By this stage in the process, the whole movement of thought has taken place. I am now at the cash register paying for this dress (whether I can afford it or not) – I feel a sense of rapture imagining a future with this dress and all the imagined joy this dress will bring when the occasion happens that I wear this dress out in the world.

Desire gains momentum once thought has created the image of me in the dress. It could be me in a new car, or me on a cruise ship taking the vacation of a lifetime, getting that graduate degree, and seeing all the people at the graduation ceremony singing my praises that I have accomplished this extraordinary thing. This next thing my mind attaches to will be the thing that fills the empty void inside me that tells me I am not enough as I am, that I need "this thing" to feel fulfilled, to achieve the status I deserve, to make me feel safe, secure, to make me feel accomplished and finally, worthy of love and respect.

The observation of the movement of desire within oneself requires tremendous clarity and awareness of one's motives and intentions. It also requires discipline and honest self-reflection. The objects of desire will always vary from person to person depending on a variety of factors including personal circumstances, conditioning, current fads and trends, age, inherent self-worth, etc. We must be able to observe these desires as they arise in us to determine whether they add value or are a detriment in our lives.

How do we work with desire to determine whether they are wholesome or unwholesome? During K's 2nd Public Talk at Brockwood Park, Hampshire, UK, on August 31, 1980, K recommended giving an interval, a long interval, between the seeing, sensation, and contact,

to post-pone the creation of an image. As stated earlier, not all desires are selfish or in service to the "self." If one can closely observe the phenomena of desire in oneself, to slow this process down, it may be possible to question the nature of the arising desire. For example: If I already have a closet full of dresses I rarely wear, do I really need another dress? What does this desire for a new dress have to teach me? Maybe I seek to achieve a graduate degree to teach or be in service to humanity and to ultimately carve out a pathway of working with others. That is obviously a very different situation than one in which I am fixated on a Ph.D. or M.D. to prove my worth and value due to lingering feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness. Perhaps I want a new car because the one I have is no longer functional and it makes no sense to continue investing in ongoing repairs. We must be able to discern, by and for ourselves, the difference between desire born of fear and sorrow versus the more wholesome desire(s) that benefit the person and perhaps also the greater whole. We can investigate what is at the root of a desire, whether it is arising from our conditioning or an unhealed trauma or wound. The observation of desire naturally requires an underlying intention to know ourselves honestly and deeply.

Desire is intimately linked with the concept of becoming which is prevalent in both K and Buddha's teachings. Obsessed with the idea of becoming something other than who or what we are, it becomes clear that desire plays a role in how many people feel they can "become" a better, more acceptable version of themselves which implies time (e.g., my life will radically change for the better once I have this dress). This "becoming" also implies the passage of time (e.g., I will have this dress). Our very being-ness is not contingent on psychological time whatsoever. Similar to desire, K recommends observing this phenomenon of becoming in oneself as a means to end it entirely.

"*Do not condemn becoming but be aware of its cause and effect in yourself. Condemnation, judgement and comparison do not bring the experience of understanding, on the contrary they will stop experience. Be silently aware of becoming; experience this silent awareness.*"[16]

See also ***Part Five: Parallels between Buddha & Krishnamurti, On Consciousness & Becoming***, for additional information.

Overcoming Fear

As we continue to explore intelligent action, it is important to consider those factors that could possibly impede our ability to perceive directly and act intelligently (i.e., insight – action). According to K, the mind has never been free from fear. Overcoming and/or understanding the true nature of fear, then, is essential to Right Action. As K stated in "Truth is a Pathless Land," he personally desired "*to free man from all cages, from all fears*." From the time we are born and throughout our lives, we experience countless perceived (psychological) and actual (physical) threats to our safety, security, and survival which the mind translates into the experience of fear since the consciousness of the average human being is hardwired towards survival. In a state of fear, however, it is not possible to be free. It is not possible to have clear understanding or direct perception, not possible to engage in right thinking. Ultimately, in a state of fear, it is not possible to know love or compassion. We are at our most vulnerable in the state of fear, easily influenced, manipulated and/or controlled by external forces,

authority figures, herd mentality, malignant societal standards, endless political distractions, etc. The problem of fear is pervasive the world over. It's akin to a form of cancer silently eating away at the very foundation of the human family in consort with its close sibling, hatred. According to Buddhist scholar and author, Christmas Humphries:

"*There are those who are frightened of almost anything, and certainly any new thing, person or situation. For shyness is a form of fear, and the inability to cope with a new situation is derived from our fear of it. We are fearful of all pain. We fear lest we are or may become unpopular, or may lose - almost anything we possess, home, health, mate, job, and all security. We are fearful of grief, not noticing that we do not grieve for our friends but for ourselves, for the feeling of loss of our friend. We are afraid of being abnormal in any way, in clothes or speech or social habits; we are frightened of the censure, however unjust, of the least of our acquaintances. We are frightened, above all, of fear [itself].*

In the mind, we are afraid most of all, for we fear, and therefore hate, the smallest new idea. We cling to a custom or convention, not because it is good but because we fear all change. We are frightened of the future because it is unknown. We are frightened of responsibility, and run to any job which enables us to avoid it. We fear to be different; fear the very thought of death; we are frightened, and this is the first and last of all our fears - of life itself…

Moreover fear has a most unpleasant twin. We fear what we hate and we hate what we fear. In our fearfulness we strike at what we fear, and hate whatever produced the cause of it. In fear a man becomes aggressive, as a dog at bay. We are all of us apt to attack when frightened and with a violence which is quite unpredictable. It is unpredictable because it is unreasonable, that is, without rational basis."[17]

According to K, as strange as it may sound, we are never afraid of the unknown. We are, however, afraid of the known coming to an end. Consider a woman who feels tremendous dissatisfaction in a job she has been doing for years. She feels bored and tired of the work she has been doing yet stays in this job. Instead of seeking a more interesting or challenging job, she continues to complain to friends and family about how little she is valued in the workplace and that each day is just a monotonous routine she somehow shows up for Monday through Friday. Is she truly afraid of seeking something different or is she comfortable in her misery, afraid of her familiar routine coming to an end?

How, then, can we overcome fear? A crucial first step might be to deepen our understanding of fear - not as a mere abstract or intellectual concept, but through the observation of how fear manifests in our own personal experiences. Can we discern when we feel fear in the moment? Can we discern the difference between perceived and actual threats? How do we respond to these different threats, or do we respond at all? K suggested that we are often unaware of our deep-seated fears, or if we are aware, we tend to repress or suppress them. As a result, we live unconsciously, driven by numerous fears, constantly seeking psychological and physical safety and security in a world that is constantly changing. K understood fear to be comprised of many forms including, but not limited to guilt, anxiety, hope, despair, etc., which he observed as being present in every type of relationship one engages in and at every level of consciousness. And what is at the root of our individual and collective fears?

"*Fear begins and ends with the desire to be secure; inward and outward security, with the desire to be certain, to have permanency. The continuity of permanence is sought in every direction, in virtue, in relationship, in action, in experience, in knowledge, in outward and inward things. To find and be secure is the everlasting cry. It is this insistent demand that breeds fear. But is there permanency, outwardly or inwardly? Perhaps in a measure, outwardly there might be, and even that is precarious; wars, revolutions, progress, accident and earthquakes. There must be food, clothes and shelter; that is essential and necessary for all. Though it is sought after, blindly and with reason, is there ever inward certainty, inward continuity, permanency? There is not. The flight from this reality is fear. The incapacity to face this reality breeds every form of hope and despair.*"[18]

Because life by its very nature is impermanent, there is rarely anything solid or lasting for one to hold on to, if ever. Change is inevitable at every step of our human journey and is mirrored by the myriad changes occurring moment by moment in the natural world - from the subatomic to the atomic, mineral to plant, animal to human to the planet itself, and yes, even the climate, is always changing. When we resist change, we create sorrow in our lives. Learning to be aware of the movement of fear in our own lives assists us in gaining greater self-awareness and offers novel opportunities to know ourselves.

K viewed fear as irrational, a product of thought, and explained that the experience of fear arises from the fluctuation of our attention as well as the mind's attempt to escape fear, rather than from any real threat in the present moment. He also fully understood the human tendency to cling to that which is perceived as pleasurable and to avoid or deny anything perceived as painful. He saw that the perceived ending of something pleasurable obviously results in fear. K additionally acknowledged that protection of one's physical body is sane and healthy. However, other forms of self-protection, those generated inwardly, are almost always linked to some form of resistance leading to fear - our internal insecurities typically resulting in competition, power struggles and self-conscious attempts to ensure our safety when no actual threat to safety is present.

"*Fear is never an actuality; it is either before or after the active present. When there is fear in the active present, is it fear? It is there and there is no escape from it, no evasion possible. There, at that actual moment, there is total attention at the moment of danger, physical or psychological. When there is complete attention there is no fear. But the actual fact of inattention breeds fear; fear arises when there is an avoidance of the fact, a flight; then the very escape itself is fear.*"[19]

"*Fear is the product of thought, not the other way round.*"[20]

Finally, K observed that time is an additional root cause of fear. Because we never know what the future holds, the future implying time, the concept of time also arouses fear. So, thought and time produce fear. As stated earlier, we have been conditioned to believe that time can cure, heal, and change a person. However, K was adamant that no psychological time was required for a person to experience an insight into the functioning of one's mind or to experience a radical transformation in one's thinking. Much like thought, K experienced time as a movement. However, he was quick to clarify that having an intellectual understanding of the roots of fear was not enough to initiate any form of change within the person. At the 2nd Public Talk in Brockwood Park, August 26, 1984, K referred to fear as an extraordinary

jewel. He expounded on fear's capacity to dominate the human mind and wreak havoc in people's lives. He advised the members of the audience that through the observation of fear, one could potentially begin to see the end of fear. When we are able to observe the entire process of thought, time and fear working together in our own lives, then there is the opportunity to end that fear and experience greater peace and harmony. Further, K explained that self-awareness and self-understanding lead to the ending of fear.

"*There's no understanding in time. Understanding does not come tomorrow; it will never come tomorrow; it is now or never; there's only now and there's no never. The "seeing" is immediate; when from the brain the significance of "seeing", understanding, eventually is wiped away, then seeing is immediate. "Seeing" is explosive, not reasoned, calculated. It is fear that often prevents "seeing", understanding. Fear, with its defences and its courage, is the origin of conflict. The seeing is not only with the brain but also beyond it. Seeing the fact brings its own action, entirely different from the action of idea, thought; action from idea, thought, breeds conflict; action then is an approximation, comparison with the formula, with the idea, and this brings conflict. There's no end to conflict, small or great, in the field of thought; the essence of conflict is non-conflict which is maturity.*"[21]

"And when fear ceases, then the power to breed illusion, myth, visions, with their hope and despair also ceases, and then only begins a movement of going beyond consciousness, which is thought and feeling. It is the emptying of the innermost recesses and deep hidden wants and desires. Then when there is this total emptiness, when there is absolutely and literally nothing, no influence, no value, no frontier, no word, then in that complete stillness of time-space, there is that which is unnameable."[22]

Fear is often the primary factor standing in the way of one's ability to honestly observe their own limitations and contradictions as well as their unlived potential and positive traits. In psychological circles, this is often referred to as "shadow work." It is essential therefore to come to state of willingness to observe ourselves as we are, as opposed to how we would like to be, to come to a deeper understanding and acceptance of our personal nature if we are to embody more love and compassion for ourselves. K felt that the purpose of life is to face our shadows instead of avoiding them out of fear. In bringing the light of awareness to the shadowy aspects of ourselves, we can know ourselves more honestly and deeply.

"*The brain is always the yesterday, and today is the shadow of yesterday, and tomorrow is the continuation of that shadow, somewhat changed but it still smells of yesterday. So the brain lives and has its being in shadows; it is safer, more comforting.*"[23]

Freedom from Conditioning

Each one of us is a product of our own unique conditioning. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines conditioning as "*a simple form of learning involving the formation, strengthening, or weakening of an association between a stimulus and a response*." This is why K was so insistent that we, humans, are nothing more than "*second-hand people*." We are the products of the environment and the culture we were raised in; we are the products of other people's beliefs and habits, rarely coming to understand anything by or for ourselves. We are products of the period we are living in or have lived in with its corresponding societal norms, collective narratives, rules regarding "what is" and "what is not" acceptable behavior. We are products

of whatever religion was thrust upon us in childhood at the discretion of our immediate family or based upon our family's heritage. Take a moment and look at just how much information is thrust upon the mind of an innocent child during the most vulnerable period of his or her life. Parents and caregivers, as well-intentioned as they may be, often inflict the greatest harm in not allowing the child's mind to develop in a natural, organic way – in alignment with an understanding of the laws of nature. Conditioning parallels the activity of registration where past memories become the operating system that runs unconsciously throughout the experiences of that child's later life up to and including their physical death. As a result of this conditioning, we translate, identify, label, and try to make sense of current events and experiences and in doing so, according to K, we miss the truth (Krishnamurti, *The First and Last Freedom*, 20.)

"*Every human being has identified himself, and so conditioned himself, with something or other, with God, with nirvana, with moksha, with heaven, with paradise and so on.*"[24]

K speaks at length on the role of conditioning in relation to human suffering. There are two main types of conditioning: classical conditioning and operant conditioning. Conditioning can occur at any point in life and, according to K, also includes generational conditioning passed down through family lineages. Classical conditioning involves the association between a neutral stimulus with an unconditioned stimulus to produce a conditioned response. A famous example of this is seen in Ivan Petrovich Pavlov's 1890 experiments with dogs: a bell (neutral stimulus) was repeatedly paired with feeding time (unconditioned stimulus) which over time resulted in the dogs salivating (conditioned response) any time they heard the sound of the bell. Operant conditioning involves learning through rewards and punishments. Behaviors that are reinforced positively are more likely to be repeated while behaviors that are reinforced negatively are less likely to occur. For example, a child might learn to clean her room (behavior) to receive praise or avoid punishment (reinforcement). In this example, the action of cleaning the room constitutes an escape from pain by receiving a reward. K felt that all our thinking is based on the principles of reward and punishment. For example:

"*So what will make each one of us - who all, surely, want to bring about a good society - change? Change has been promised through reward - heaven, a new kind of carrot, a new ideology, a new community, a new set of groups, new gurus. Or a punishment. – 'If you don't do this you will go to hell.' So our whole thinking is based on this principle of reward and punishment. 'I will do this if I can get something out of it.' But that kind of attitude, or that way of thinking, doesn't bring about radical change. And such a change is absolutely necessary.*"[25]

K broke conditioning into four categories: physical, emotional, psychological, and intellectual. He stated that this conditioning comes into being based on one's desires, self-centered activities, lack of right relationship with self and others, one's loneliness and sense of emptiness. Examples of our conditioning include: our nationality, political party preference, our caste, religious affiliation, level of education or lack thereof, our beliefs, pleasure and conflict, and psychological conflict, to name a few. Our conditioning, according to K, occurs throughout our lives both internally and externally – the general chaos and confusion in the world at large contributing greatly. K proposed that an antidote to our conditioning could lie in the observation, the seeing of our own personal conditioning in and

for ourselves, which he referred to as insight.

"*Without freedom from conditioning, humanity will always remain a prisoner and life will remain a battlefield…*

So, seeing what the world is, with its wars, hatred, strife, confusions, is to see yourself as you are. And to see yourself as you are is to see the world which you have created from what you are. In this seeing is freedom. To see a danger is to avoid it. To see the danger of this heavy conditioning of man is to avoid all conditioning. What is important in all this is to see not only with the intellect but also with the actual eye."[26]

"*We are asking ourselves - thinking together, as I hope we are - can this conditioning, this human prison with its grief, loneliness, anxiety, personal assertions, demands, fulfillment, and all that - that is our conditioning, our consciousness, and our consciousness is its content - can that whole structure be transformed? Otherwise we will never have peace in this world. There will perhaps be small modifications but man will be fighting, quarrelling, perpetually in conflict within himself and outwardly. So that is our question. Can we think together about this?*"[27]

Beyond Violence & Living without Division

"*We have built a society which is violent and we, as human beings, are violent; the environment, the culture in which we live, is the product of our endeavour, of our struggle, of our pain, of our appalling brutalities. So the most important question is: is it possible to end this tremendous violence in oneself? That is really the question.*"[28]

The vast majority of humans cannot fathom that their lives are riddled with violence from childhood onward into adulthood: violence within themselves in the form of internal conflicts, habitual self-destructive thoughts and behaviors, conscious or unconscious self-loathing and shadowy feelings of inherent worthlessness. There is also the external violence directed against other humans through the forms of competition, jealousy, envy, etc. as well as towards animals and nature itself. Societal conditioning over the last two decades continues to normalize violence as evidenced in mainstream movies, reality-based television programs, social media, and especially in news broadcasts. Many people feel that they are not violent because they do not engage in the typical forms of physical violence. However, violence can pertain to any thought/idea, situation, relationship, etc. where harm has occurred either towards self or other or has created a division in oneself or between oneself and others.

"*Violence is not merely physical; it is also imitation, conformity, moving away from 'what is'. So violence can end completely in the human mind, in the human heart, only when there is no opposite… Is there not violence when you are seeking more and more, 'becoming' more and more? So look at violence and remain with it… treasure it… when you see something very clearly, it is gone.*"[29]

What is the root of this violence? According to K, we are, for the most part, completely fragmented within ourselves and in our thinking. We live in contradictions, broken up inside, saying one thing and doing something quite the opposite - believing something but acting in opposition to that belief – all of which inevitably leads to conflict and ultimately, suffering.

Much of this fragmentary activity is taking place unconsciously outside the scope of conscious awareness driven by endless fears and the constant striving for security in an impermanent world where nothing is ever certain for any length of time. The opposite of this state of being would be one of integrity meaning sane, rational, clear, and unconfused thinking and therefore action based on insight.

Right Conduct, from a Buddhist perspective, means living in a way that fosters respect, compassion, and mindfulness in all our interactions, promoting peace and harmony both within ourselves and with all others (even those we dislike). It encourages us to act with integrity, to be conscious of the impact of our speech and actions, and to cultivate a life that supports the well-being of all living creatures, including ourselves. To put things in perspective and in accordance with K's observations, all humans are operating from a place of disorganized and fragmentary thinking; they are operating in alignment with the reality creation of their own making based on their conditioning, function of registration (i.e., memory) and their personal screen of resistance. Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist C. G. Jung (1875-1961) once said "Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate." Making an intention to live with greater awareness assumes that the totality of our behavior must be called into question, must be scrutinized with awareness to determine for and by ourselves the true nature of our motives and intentions throughout our daily living and not via some external authority.

"*As long as the 'me' survives in any form, very subtly or grossly, there must be violence.*"[30]

From K's perspective, it is vitally important that we come to the realization that we are violent in a myriad of ways from our self-destructive habits or self-deprecating tendencies to the violence we consciously or unconsciously inflict upon others. No human is immune to the fact that we have undergone thousands of years of conditioning to accept violence as a natural and normal way of life. Living without division whether within ourselves or in relation to the external world then becomes a critical aspect of our own awakening of intelligence and the evolution of human consciousness. During the 13th School Discussion at Brockwood Park in 1976, K explained that when we engage in the physical act of killing, we are actually killing ourselves. Additionally, when we divide ourselves, based on our conditioning, relegate others to positions of less than or greater than ourselves, we are also engaging in a form of violence and therefore division.

"*So we are trying to find out whether it is possible to live in this world, actually in this world of relationship of man, woman, between each other without any division - you understand? Is that possible? When all our education, all our culture, all our religions, everything is to divide, divide, divide. What makes this division? - apart from the superficial physical division, we are talking about psychological division, the inward sense of me and you, we and they. Why does this division exist? Is it actual? Is it something that we have been conditioned to, like the Arab and the Jew, and the Muslim and the Hindu, this division which has been created through culture and religion, which obviously is the result of thought and propaganda and all that business. Actually there is no division. If I live in India I am not an Indian or a Muslim, there is no division… So I create an image about you and you create an image about me. So this relationship is between the two images... And this is what we call relationship.*"[31]

When K says, "You are the world," he is emphasizing the profound connection between our inner lives and the world around us. Our relationship with ourselves reflects the larger, collective reality. If we want to see meaningful change in the world, it must begin with a transformation within ourselves. We are often conditioned to believe that the resolution to widespread violence and societal issues must come from external sources (i.e., politicians, religious leaders, or spiritual figures). However, K challenges this perspective by suggesting that real change begins with the awareness of the violence within us.

This violence manifests in the countless divisions we create in our daily lives, in the form of judgments, separations, or protective boundaries designed to establish safety and security for ourselves. These divisions, though often subtle, are still acts of violence from K's perspective. He contends that it is through recognizing these inner conflicts and contradictions that true transformation can begin. When we confront the violence within, we can catalyze change on an individual level, which has the potential to ripple out into the collective and contribute to the broader change we wish to see in the world.

We have the capacity to address both the subtle and more overt forms of violence through a shift in in our own consciousness as well as through the mirror of our own relationships. This transformation can be achieved by cultivating an intention to truly understand ourselves, by acknowledging that violence, in its many forms, is a reality embedded within each of us, often unconsciously and once brought into conscious awareness can be dropped completely. It is only through making this violence conscious through genuine self-observation and reflection, that we can begin to understand and acknowledge the unconscious forces that perpetuate harm. By observing ourselves without judgment and with full awareness, we can break free from the cycles of division and violence that keep us locked in conflict, both within and with others. K considered the observation of oneself without judgement to be one of the highest forms of intelligence.

Meaningful Work & Right Living

For most people, work takes up a significant portion of their life. But how often does that work truly align with one's values and purpose? Does it bring greater meaning to life or diminish it? Imagine a world where most people not only enjoy their work but also find joy in their accomplishments and in sharing their unique gifts with others. In Buddhism, this concept is known as Right Livelihood, but it can also be described as purposeful occupation or meaningful work. It refers to work that aligns with one's true understanding, focusing on the well-being of oneself and others, rather than being driven by personal gain or societal pressures and expectations. This type of work is not just about survival or profit; it is imbued with meaning, purpose, and integrity. From a Buddhist perspective, Right Livelihood or Right Occupation is work that contributes positively to the well-being of both oneself and others, without causing harm.

K often referred to Right Livelihood as Right Living, emphasizing a broader, more holistic approach to life outside of the scope of just earning a living. He felt deeply that each person is born with inherent gifts that are meant be realized over the course of their life. In his conversations with children, he frequently asked, "What do you love to do?" and encouraged them to pursue what truly inspired them. However, many students explained to him that their

parents had already proposed their future, pushing them toward careers in medicine, science, law, and other fields, even at a young age. This early conditioning of children frustrated K, and he spoke out about it publicly, urging children to be allowed to grow naturally, to discover their true path, and to avoid being pressured into a life that was not in alignment with their own inherent interests and passions. K felt one of worst outcomes for a young person was to grow up mediocre - irrespective of accumulated wealth or status in later life. K insisted that it was *being* and not accomplishment that mattered the most (Luytens, *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti*, 152).

"*We are concerned with livelihood, getting jobs, earning money; we are concerned with the relationship with our family or with our neighbours, and we are concerned with ideas and with beliefs. Now, if you examine our occupation, it is fundamentally based on envy, it is not just a means of earning a livelihood. Society is so constructed that it is a process of constant conflict, constant becoming; it is based on greed, on envy, envy of your superior; the clerk wanting to become the manager, which shows that he is not just concerned with earning a livelihood, a means of subsistence, but with acquiring position and prestige. This attitude naturally creates havoc in society, in relationship, but if you and I were only concerned with livelihood we should find out the right means of earning it, a means not based on envy. Envy is one of the most destructive factors in relationship because envy indicates the desire for power, for position, and it ultimately leads to politics; both are closely related. The clerk, when he seeks to become a manager, becomes a factor in the creation of power-politics which produce war; so he is directly responsible for war.*"[32]

During the Saanen, Switzerland, 2nd Question & Answer Meeting on July 24, 1980, in a talk entitled "Right Living," K posed the following question to the audience:

"*We are asking each other: is there a way of living which will naturally bring about a right livelihood and at the same time enable us to live without a single shadow of conflict?*"[33]

Living without division and/or internal conflict, according to K, could produce real intelligence that would naturally lead one to discover a right way of living unique to that individual. However, due to the fragmentary nature of thought, many people would not be able to overcome their own internal conflicts and contradictions remaining in competition and driven by becoming or desires linked to wanting more from life – more money, status, prestige, power, etc. He stated that if a person were able to observe their own fragmentation thereby producing a shift in consciousness, humans could return to a state of wholeness where they could then operate from a place of integrity dropping the whole notion of envy and competition.

During the second discussion at Rishi Valley School on December 14, 1983 (Extract #1), K was asked, "What is the greatest profession?" His response emphasized that, in his view, the most noble profession was that of a teacher. He explained that teaching was not simply about imparting information but about preparing a new generation to engage meaningfully with life. However, he was not referring to the conventional notion of teaching as we understand it today, where students are taught what to think, often stifling their curiosity, imagination, and intelligence to fit them into predefined societal roles. This traditional model, in K's eyes,

merely prepared children for a future life in the workforce, conforming to expectations rather than fostering true self-awareness.

K was deeply passionate about a different concept of education, where the teacher and student learn together, free from the traditional hierarchy and authority found in most classrooms. He envisioned a learning process based on mutual inquiry, one that went beyond the mere transmission of knowledge. For him, teaching was a living, dynamic exploration of what it means to be truly human. It was about delving into the nature of right living and discovering the full potential of human existence, unbound by the constraints of societal norms and conditioning.

In this context, his aim was to cultivate radically free individuals - people who could think for themselves and make decisions independent of societal pressures and expectations. He envisioned a society where individuals were not bound by the conventional patterns of life: seeking a job, getting married, buying a house, and settling into the grind of a nine-to-five routine. K warned that such rigid structures inevitably led to a mechanical, robotic existence, where people lived unexamined lives, trapped in the monotony of social conformity, ultimately resulting in a society filled with unhappy, unfulfilled people.

"*Right occupation is not dictated by tradition, greed, or ambition. If each one is seriously concerned in establishing right relationship, not only with one but with all, then he will find right occupation. Right occupation comes with regeneration, with the change of heart, not with the mere intellectual determination to find it.*"[34]

Right Effort, Right Mindfulness & Right Contemplation

The final three elements of this *Pathless Path* apply to Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Contemplation which are contained within a state of elevated meditative consciousness referred to as Samādhi in Buddhism. In Sanskrit, Samādhi refers to "total self-collectedness" which represents the highest state of conscious awareness devoid of self-identification of an "I." This state of consciousness has been described as one of rapture, tranquility, embodied stillness, ecstatic joyfulness, etc. In this state of being, one possesses sustained attention, lucidity as well as a whole-hearted presence where attention is undivided and alive with the fullness of experience - one is present not just in body or mind, but with one's whole being, fully open and receptive to the present moment. The three elements of this final section of the *Pathless Path* include the attributes of effort, meditation, and contemplation.

No Effort Required

Effort refers to the energy we put into both physical and mental activities. In Buddhism, Right Effort has been described as the practice of diligently cultivating virtuous qualities while abandoning non-virtuous thoughts and actions. It emphasizes a mindful and balanced approach to life, where physical and mental activities are guided as much as possible by wisdom and compassion. For a Buddhist, Right Effort represents the delicate balance between striving for personal growth and embracing the present moment, between applying effort and knowing when to release it. This balance may foster a life that is purposeful, peaceful, and

rooted in a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world. K, however, challenged this view by asserting that effort has no place in a fully realized life. He argued that any striving for self-knowledge or understanding is inherently a product of thought, driven by the ego's need for self-identification with the "I." Further, K explained that effort for personal gain, to accumulate profit or success or some advantage over someone else creates internal division within oneself thus destroying the spontaneity of living in the present moment, producing struggle and finally, suffering.

From a young age, society conditions us to believe that anything of value in life requires immense effort and struggle. This mindset is deeply ingrained in our culture through proverbs like "No pain, no gain," which suggests that only through hardship can we achieve success. Even in education, we are taught that academic rewards, such as grades and accolades, are only attainable through hard work and dedication. This idea of effort equating to reward is pervasive, shaping not just our academic journeys but also our personal and professional lives.

In contemporary society, the relationship between effort, reward, and punishment is a fundamental driving force in the creation of internal and external conflicts. We are constantly being taught that to achieve anything meaningful - whether it is academic success, career advancement, or personal milestones - we must push ourselves to the limit, often at the expense of our mental and physical well-being. This notion is particularly prevalent in the corporate world, where the promise of financial bonuses, promotions, or social recognition serves as a "golden carrot" for those who can deliver the highest results.

In this environment, employees are often expected to sacrifice their personal lives, working long hours from Monday to Friday, relentlessly chasing after goals that promise greater financial rewards or social status. However, the toll this pursuit takes is substantial. The stress, anxiety, and exhaustion from striving for perfection often come at the cost of one's health, serenity, peace of mind, and overall well-being. Ultimately, many find themselves trapped in a cycle of overwork and undernourishment, both mentally and physically, believing that the only path to success lies in relentless effort and sacrifice. K was well aware of this aspect of the human condition:

"*In effort, which is the result of seeking gain, profit, advantage, there cannot be understanding or the realization of that which is life. Why do you make an effort? To be something other than what you are. But it is only by discovering what you are, by knowing your innumerable deceptions, conceits, vanities, and your desire for power and conformity, that you become free. Hence the needlessness of effort.*"[35]

K insisted that effort reflected a disturbance in the mind, as it inevitably led to exhaustion. He saw pure observation as the antithesis of effort where energy was not spent with the same intensity, creating a more peaceful and harmonious state of being. Effort, according to K, stemmed from the same place as control or force. It could not exist without a motive or goal, which were always products of thought, serving the ego. K shared that, in his experience, living without effort brought about a spontaneous sense of ecstasy, which he viewed as true beauty - the supreme clarity in discerning right values. In that state, there was a sense of eternity and immortality, a continuous flow of life where there was no self-identification. K further declared that effort not only implies conflict within the mind, but also violence:

"We have accepted war as the way of life. And accepting it, we do nothing about it. Casually or devotedly we may become pacifists in one part of our own life, but for the rest we are in conflict; we are ambitious, we are competitive, we make tremendous efforts; such effort implies conflict and therefore violence. Any form of conformity, any form of distortion - purposely or unconsciously - is violence. To discipline oneself according to a pattern, an ideal, a principle, is a form of violence. Any distortion, without understanding actually 'what is' and going beyond it, is a form of violence."[36]

From K's perspective, humans inherently embody the entire movement of life within themselves. Therefore, there is truly nothing to seek or search for and certainly not in the external world. As infinitely intelligent and creative beings, the wholeness of life is our birthright, a profound essence awakened in us the moment our human journey began. This essence, often referred to as the Absolute or Truth, is the very core of our existence. Spiritual seekers, throughout their lifetimes, strive to access this state of consciousness, believing it is something that requires great effort to attain. However, the Truth they seek often appears veiled beneath layers of conditioning, fragmented thought, and internal conflicts within themselves. This creates the illusion that something is missing - something that must be found. In reality, the Absolute has never been absent; it is distant only because it is obscured by the noise of the mind and the distractions of the external world. It is, in fact, inherent within each one of us, waiting to be realized.

When the mind is quiet, when we embody a state of whole-hearted presence, and when we approach ourselves with love, compassion, and a sincere intention to know who we truly are, we begin to reconnect with this inner truth. This awakening is not something that requires strenuous effort or striving. It is more akin to the natural process of a flower blooming; it unfolds effortlessly, given the right conditions - patience, self-observation, and the cultivation of self-awareness. The more we attune ourselves to the stillness within, the more we allow this deeper knowing to emerge into our consciousness and can then experience the awakening of the Truth that has always been present, waiting quietly for us to acknowledge it.

Meditation

During his public and private talks, K encouraged his listeners to explore meditation. One thing that sets K apart from other spiritual teachers promoting meditation is that K never provided any instructions, nor did he endorse any particular meditation technique. Rather, he encouraged meditators to discover for themselves how they could best utilize this form of inner reflection as a means to achieve insight in their daily lives. In his talks, K often described meditation as a state of total attention devoid of the distractions of thought, beyond the activities of thought which could lead to a freedom from fear, the persistent feelings of separateness and from all authority and ambition.

Referred to in Buddhism as Right Mindfulness (and also Correct Meditation or Holy Meditation), this element of the *Pathless Path* addresses being present with "what is" – being deeply present with the reality of each moment, without resistance or escape. This definition aligns with K's idea of observing life directly, without interference from the mind's desires or judgements and points to an enduring attention or concentration without effort. K was reluctant to ever provide any direction or instructions on the topic of meditation and always

stressed its importance as a direct path towards knowing oneself. He insisted that to know oneself deeply, one had to observe the functioning of the mind silently and that the practitioner must find their own unique method of observation for themselves. K was vehemently opposed to gurus and technique-based meditation practices aimed at fostering mental discipline, specifically transcendental meditation, as he felt it only served to dull the mind (Luytens, *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti*, xv.). Using negations, K often spoke of what meditation was not:

"*Meditation is not conscious meditation. What we have been taught is conscious, deliberate meditation, sitting cross-legged or lying down or repeating certain phrases, which is a deliberate, conscious effort to meditate. The speaker says such meditation is nonsense. It is part of desire. Desiring to have a peaceful mind is the same as desiring a good house or a good dress. Conscious meditation destroys, prevents the other form of meditation*."[37]

K felt these various forms of "disciplined" meditation were not only not conducive to the expansion of self-knowledge or self-awareness, but they also actually caused a degree of harm to the practitioner:

"*Take, for example, meditation. Your teacher, your theory, or your book, offers you a certain discipline for meditation; it may be an idea or a picture. What you do is repeatedly to force your mind in conformity with it, and thereby you contract your mind and destroy its pliability. This repetition, the imitative pursuit of a system or of an idea, you call meditation or concentration. Hence your efforts, through conformity, are constantly creating hindrances which prevent the releasing of that potential, inherent intelligence with its divinity, truth or immortality*."[38]

So, if meditation is not repeating a mantra or chanting "AUM" in yoga class, sitting and concentrating on the in breath and out breath - if it is not re-training the brain or attempting to help one to achieve greater concentration or focus, what is it? What did meditation mean to K? Although he rarely spoke about his own personal experiences with what he called "meditation," there are some references that expand on his personal ideas on what he came to know as meditation for himself. In the biography, *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti*, Mary Lutyens referenced an excerpt from a letter written by K in 1937 to Mary's mother, Lady Emily:

"*'I am deeply thrilled with the discovery inside oneself,' he wrote to Lady Emily [Luytens], 'there are many ideas and I am slowly trying to find suitable words and expressions for them. There is a deep ecstasy. There is a maturity that is not to be forced, not to be artificially stimulated. It alone can bring about abundant fullness and reality to life. I am really glad for this quietness and apparently purposeless meditation.'*

This is probably K's first mention of what was to him 'real' meditation - 'making unexpected and amazing discoveries within oneself' without any direction or purpose. At such times his mind was at its keenest, most probing and alive. The popularly understood idea of meditation, tranquillising the mind by fixing it on one word or object, or practising some other form of technique, was, to him, deadening and useless."[39]

During a meeting between K and author, Ravi Ravindra Ph.D., in the late 1960's, in Ojai, California, Dr. Ravindra presented K with an article he had written entitled "Letter to J. Krishnamurti." The two men had a chance to discuss Ravindra's work while in dialogue with each other. Dr. Ravindra shared the following:

"*Since I have been interested for a long time in the quality of attention and seeing which can bring about an action in oneself so that a radical change can take place naturally, from the inside, I asked Krishnamurti about it. For him thought leads to fragmentation and, subsequently, to fear and sorrow, as for the Buddha tanha (selfish craving) leads to dukkha (sorrow), or for the Vedantist avidya (ignorance) leads to maya (illusion). In all of these teachings, what is required for sorrow, fear and illusion to be dissolved in the clear light of intelligence and truth is total attention. I asked him about the nature of this attention, and said, 'What I find in myself is the fluctuation of attention.' He said with emphasis, 'What fluctuates is not attention. Only inattention fluctuates.'*"[40]

K's degree of self-observation with regards to his own attention and inattention demonstrates the level of quiet observation that must take place in order for one to really see the mind operating in real time. His razor-sharp ability to discern the functioning of the mind shows us what is necessary to not only see ourselves clearly but to make the leap of change via insight. K stressed that meditation was essentially the ending of thought, the ending of image-making, and the complete end of psychological knowledge freeing the mind from the past and all conditioning. He maintained that we must put our own house in order before we begin tackling the problems of the world. Additionally, in the 1933 May-June edition of the International Star Bulletin, K recommended that we needed to become fully aware of all our words, actions, thoughts, and feelings. Whenever thoughts arise in the mind, we should think these thoughts through completely – all the desires, opinions, fears, ideals, etc. and in thinking them through to completion, one could become free of these limitations that impede our true perception.

"*The beginning of meditation is self-knowledge, which means being aware of every movement of thought and feeling, knowing all the layers of my consciousness, not only the superficial layers but the hidden, the deeply concealed activities. To know the deeply concealed activities, the hidden motives, responses, thoughts and feelings, there must be tranquillity in the conscious mind; that is the conscious mind must be still in order to receive the projection of the unconscious. The superficial, conscious mind is occupied with its daily activities, with earning a livelihood, deceiving others, exploiting others, running away from problems - all the daily activities of our existence. That superficial mind must understand the right significance of its own activities and thereby bring tranquillity to itself. It cannot bring about tranquillity, stillness, by mere regimentation, by compulsion, by discipline. It can bring about tranquillity, peace, stillness, only by understanding its own activities, by observing them, by being aware of them, by seeing its own ruthlessness, how it talks to the servant, to the wife, to the daughter, to the mother and so on. When the superficial, conscious mind is thus fully aware of all its activities, through that understanding it becomes spontaneously quiet, not drugged by compulsion or regimented by desire; then it is in a position to receive the intimation, the hints of the unconscious, of the many, many hidden layers of the mind - the racial instincts, the buried memories, the concealed pursuits, the deep wounds that are still unhealed. It is only when all these have projected themselves and are understood, when the whole consciousness is unburdened, unfettered by any wound, by any memory whatsoever, that it is in a position to receive the eternal.*"[41]

Meditation, therefore, requires an active watchful mind, being aware in each moment, paying close attention to our thoughts, feelings, emotions, and actions without judgement. K stressed that non-effort leads to tranquility; in this relaxed state of tranquility, consciousness could therefore become conscious of itself. This state could be described as an engaged, alive consciousness. As stated earlier, when one is fully present to the 'what is' of the present moment, one is fully alive and, in that state, there is no division between the unconscious and the conscious. It can be seen as one unitary movement of life, and of sorrow. In this sense, K felt it was possible for the brain to be unconditioned, to be free of the known. During the 2nd Public Question & Answer Meeting at Brockwood Park, England on September 2, 1982, he stated that if the brain could become completely free of all accumulated psychological knowledge, then the brain and mind have an infinite capacity for intelligence, compassion, and love. To reach this state, however, one must study oneself and realize this truth internally. Reading books or consulting with authorities could never produce the same quality of self-awareness as sincere meditation. In that state of unity between the unconscious and the conscious, K explained that one could discover that the mind, brain, and consciousness itself are one leading to true freedom from conditioning.

"*To become aware, you must give time to it, you must have patience and alertness. Meditation is the cleansing of the mind and heart of egotism. Through this purification, there comes into being right thinking, which alone is capable of freeing man from sorrow.*"[42]

Total Awareness & The Heart of Compassion

The final element of the Buddhist Eightfold Path is Right Contemplation, or *sammā-samādhi* in Pāli. This term is often translated as Correct Tranquility or Right Rapture, and it encompasses a deep and sustained state of mindfulness and focus, accompanied by a profound sense of inner peace and affection for all of life. Right Contemplation refers to a meditative state of mental clarity where one's attention is fully absorbed in the present moment, free from distraction or disturbance. It is described as a single-pointedness of mind - an unwavering, concentrated awareness that persists over time. K might refer to this state of mind as "total awareness."

This state of consciousness is akin to moments we might experience in daily life, where the individual "self" temporarily steps aside in pursuit of a task. For instance, when an athlete engages in a race or competition, or when an artist becomes entirely engrossed in the process of painting, there is a temporary dissolution of self-consciousness as the mind becomes fully immersed in the activity. This kind of focused attention is a glimpse of *samādhi*, but the Buddhist concept takes it further by elevating it to a higher, purer form of awareness which persists.

In the context of Buddhist practice, *samādhi* pertains to a wholesome, single-mindedness - an elevated state of consciousness that is beyond meditation. It is a unified awareness where the heart and mind are in complete harmony. In this state, there is no internal conflict or division; instead, thoughts and emotions align seamlessly, allowing for profound insight and peace. It is not merely a state of calmness, but a dynamic and sustained clarity that brings an individual closer to true wisdom and enlightenment. In this sense, *samādhi* is an essential component of

the path to liberation, guiding practitioners toward a life of balance, insight, and deep, abiding tranquility.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, student of global spiritual leader, poet, and peace activist Thich Nhat Hanh said of mindfulness: "*In Asian languages, the word for 'mind' and the word for 'heart' are the same. So, if you're not hearing mindfulness in some deep way as heartfulness, you're not really understanding it. Compassion and kindness towards oneself are intrinsically woven into it. You could think of mindfulness as wise and affectionate attention*."[43] The congruency of mind and heart that Kabat-Zinn speaks of is a topic K also addressed in many of his talks and particularly in his early writings. He described personal experiences of having the awareness of himself as well as an "otherness" without a sense of division or separation in various editions from 1930 of the International Star Bulletin (ISB). From his book, *On Love and Loneliness*, K stated:

"*It is only when the mind is quiet that it shall know love, and that state of quietness is not a thing to be cultivated. Cultivation is still the action of the mind; discipline is still a product of the mind, and a mind that is disciplined, controlled, subjugated, a mind that is resisting explaining, cannot know love. You may read, you may listen to what is being said about love, but that is not love. Only when you put away the things of the mind, only when your heart is empty of the things of the mind, is there love. Then you will know what it is to love without separation, without distance, without time, without fear – and that is not reserved to the few. Love knows no hierarchy, there is only love. There are the many and the one, an exclusiveness, only when you do not love. When you love, there is neither the 'you' or the 'me'. In that state, there is only a flame without smoke*."[44]

Our earliest memories, whether they are conscious or unconscious, relate to the separation we endure during the birth process. No longer intimately connected and a part of our mother's body, it is not uncommon for infants to feel their first feelings of alienation and isolation from the person who sustained their very being at the beginning of our life. This often results in lifelong fears or desires around our inherent feelings of wholeness within ourselves. In learning what love is and is not, we can begin to generate those feelings of kindness and compassion towards ourselves as opposed to continually striving to attach or connect with something outside of us to provide us with a sense of belonging. K explained that love was neither personal or impersonal but a state where comparison, division and conflict had ceased within the person. In transcending those influences, we reach that organic unity of heart and mind within ourselves and discover for ourselves the values that shape our lives and experiences.

"*True discernment of the right values in all human experiences comes only when your heart and mind are poised in harmony and free from all prejudices and deceits*."[45]

"*The realization of truth, of that indescribable reality which has no beginning and no end, cannot come through imitation, through conformity and good works, or through virtues, which are but acquisitions. Only when there is the cessation of effort, craving, only when mind and heart are free from all want, which is different from needs, is there the discovery of right values and the ecstasy of a spontaneous, natural living which is creative, ever renewing and beyond time.*"[46]

Our capacity for love is shut down by many factors: when one is not able to observe oneself accurately, because of fear, insecurities, or general confusion in one's thinking. This leads a person to feel isolated and further imprisoned by their own ego-constructs, through their individuality or attachment to self-consciousness. Self-inquiry, according to K, can only take place in a mind that is sane and healthy, in one that is not at the mercy of external authorities. A free person who is not aligned with nationalism, societal engineering, comparison, greed, envy, etc. has the capacity to observe the movement of thought and the movement of life on a moment-by-moment basis with this single-pointed awareness from a place of compassion. This compassion has its own intelligence, and its action is always true (Krishnamurti, *That Benediction is Where You Are: The Last Bombay Talks*, 1985). The embodiment of this intelligence naturally culminates in a sense of personal freedom:

"*Freedom is not merely freedom from something, but is freedom in itself. This does not mean freedom to do whatever one likes, so one has to understand not merely verbally but factually what that word implies. We are not trying to define what freedom is; each one would interpret it according to his own fancy, inclination or upbringing, and some would even deny that there is such a thing at all. Freedom is to be found not by seeking it, but rather by understanding what it is that imprisons the mind. When these prison walls are broken, then there is freedom naturally, and one does not have to seek it. So what is important is not how to achieve freedom or to ask what freedom is, but rather to ask why the mind-which is the product of time and environment and has had so many experiences of misery and conflict - is not free.*"[47]

Notes

[1] Ravindra, *Krishnamurti: Two Birds on One Tree*, 79-80.
[2] Jayakar, *Fire in the Mind: Dialogues with J. Krishnamurti*, 251.
[3] Retrieved from www.celextel.org Vedanta Spiritual Library, Krishnamurti, *The Way of Intelligence*, 69-70.
[4] Retrieved from www.celextel.org Vedanta Spiritual Library, Krishnamurti, *Exploration into Insight*, 19-20.
[5] Krishnamurti, *Think on These Things*, 7.
[6] Krishnamurti, *The Urgency of Change*, 107-108.
[7] Krishnamurti, *The First and Last Freedom*, 19.
[8] *Ibid.*, 221.
[9] *Ibid.*, 43-44.
[10] Retrieved from www.jkrishnamurti.org/content/madras-9th-public-talk-2nd-february-1952
[11] Mehta & Mehta, *J. Krishnamurti and Sant Kabir*, 6.
[12] *Ibid.*, 5.
[13] Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, 129.
[14] Mehta & Mehta, *J. Krishnamurti and Sant Kabir*, 4.
[15] Krishnamurti, J. (1931, February). Poem by Krishnamurti. *ISB*, Vol. 2, 2.
[16] Krishnamurti, *Early Talks, Vol. VII*, 20-21.
[17] Humphreys, *Studies in the Middle Way: Being Thoughts on Buddhism Applied*, 104-105.
[18] Krishnamurti, *Krishnamurti's Notebook*, 102-103.
[19] *Ibid.*, 102.
[20] Retrieved from www.celextel.org Vedanta Spiritual Library, Krishnamurti, *The Way of Intelligence*, 46.
[21] Krishnamurti, *Krishnamurti's Notebook*, 74-75.
[22] *Ibid.*, 102-104.
[23] *Ibid.*, 54.
[24] Krishnamurti, *Can Humanity Change? J. Krishnamurti in Dialogue with Buddhists*, 35.
[25] *Ibid.*, 174.
[26] Retrieved from https://www.jkrishnamurti.org/content/chapter-58-fear-breeds-authority
[27] Krishnamurti, *Can Humanity Change? J. Krishnamurti in Dialogue with Buddhists*, 143.
[28] Krishnamurti, *Beyond Violence*, 75.
[29] Krishnamurti, *That Benediction is Where you Are*, 12-13.
[30] Krishnamurti, *Beyond Violence*, 73.
[31] Krishnamurti, Second Public Talk at Brockwood Park, 30 August 1980 - Transcript presented at the 2019 international conference at K Study Centre Rajghat, "What is Right Action in this Chaotic World"
[32] Krishnamurti, *The First and Last Freedom*, 37.
[33] Retrieved from https://www.jkrishnamurti.org/content/24th-question-saanen-2nd-question-answer-meeting-24th-july-1980-'right-living'
[34] Krishnamurti, *Early Writings, Vol. IV*, 99.
[35] Krishnamurti, J. (1933, May-June). Talks at Adyar, India. *ISB*, Vol. 3, 82.
[36] Krishnamurti, *Beyond Violence*, 115-116.
[37] Luytens, *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti*, 140.
[38] Krishnamurti, J. (1933, May-June). Talks at Adyar, India. *ISB*, Vol. 3, 93.
[39] Luytens, *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti*, 91-92.
[40] Ravindra, *Krishnamurti: Two Birds on One Tree*, 68-69.
[41] Krishnamurti, *The First and Last Freedom*, 219-220.
[42] Krishnamurti, *The World Within*, 27.
[43] Retrieved from: https://www.eomega.org/workshops/way-awareness
[44] Krishnamurti, *On Love and Loneliness*, 37.
[45] Krishnamurti, J. (1933, May-June). Talks at Adyar, India. *ISB*, Vol. 3, 96.
[46] *Ibid.*, 97.
[47] Retrieved from https://www.jkrishnamurti.org/content/chapter-58-fear-breeds-authority

Part Eight: The End of Sorrow

Can Humanity Change?

Life does not come with an instruction manual - a guide or map to help us understand why we are here, what it all means, and how we are supposed to navigate this journey. No one asks for the struggles we face - the pain, the disappointments, the losses, illness, tragedy, confusion, or all the moments of uncertainty and doubt. Each of us, at some point, must arrive at our own understanding of what it means to be alive and what purpose our lives hold. When we witness so much suffering, both in our own lives and in the world around us, what keeps us from undergoing a fundamental transformation? Is it simply habit, laziness, or the mind's attachment to familiar patterns that resist change? Does suffering serve a purpose? For K, suffering, if recognized, felt deeply, and allowed to mature through its natural lifecycle, could lead us to liberation.

"*So each one of us must seek, so each one of us must dance through life, must have tremendous ecstasies, great sorrows and pains and great pleasures, and the greater and stronger they are, the more quickly shall we arrive at that stage of Nirvana, that absolute oneness with life.*"[1]

Throughout K's life, one of his greatest concerns was the sickness he witnessed within society. As early as 1911, he began addressing issues such as division, fragmented thinking, inner conflict and violence. Yet, because most people saw these problems as external, few were willing to take action. Additionally, because past generations normalized the trauma and abuse within the family system, humanity's collective consciousness has largely continued to regress, with only a small percentage of people evolving. Where abuse, trauma, and violence are normalized and where technology has evolved at such a rapid rate, we find egregious acts of violence becoming more and more prevalent and to some degree, accepted and even rewarded by some societies.

Until his death, K held steadfast to a single-pointed focus of attention on his self-proclaimed mission in life: "*To produce a different kind of human being was the purpose of K's teaching. His main theme at the Saanen gathering that year [1973] was how to bring about 'a fundamental, revolutionary, psychological change in the mind'. He had now begun to say, moreover, that the change must be instantaneous. It was useless to say, 'I will try to change', or 'I will be different tomorrow', for what you were today you would be tomorrow. 'The future is now' is a phrase he was to use.*"[2]

K was adamant that humanity could change, confident that an entire revolution could be sparked by one person or a very small number of people who had awakened to the true nature of themselves and of reality. He was also very clear that the changes that could benefit humanity as a whole would come through at the individual level and ripple out into the collective. According to K, it would take just one person who has undergone a transformation of the mind to change the entire course of the world.

"*Are fundamental revolutions brought about by the mass, or are they started by the few who see and who, by their talk and energy, influence very many people? That is how revolutions are brought about. Is it not a mistake to think that, as individuals, we cannot do anything? Is it not a fallacy to think that*

all fundamental revolutions are produced by the mass? Does it not spring essentially from the individual, and then spread from individual to individual? There is really no such thing as the mass. After all, the mass is an entity formed of people who are caught, hypnotized by words, by certain ideas. The moment we are not hypnotized by words, we are outside that stream – something no politician [or government] would like. Should we not remain outside the stream, and collect more and more from the stream, in order to affect the stream? Is it not important that there should be a fundamental transformation in the individual first, that you and I should radically change first, without waiting for the whole world to change? It is not an escapist's view, a form of laziness, an avoidance of the issue, to think that you and I, in however small a degree, cannot affect society as a whole?"[3]

Yet, many of K's followers, even after decades of listening to him, reported that they had not fundamentally changed. Some of them were close to him, hearing his teachings not just in public talks but in more intimate settings. How could this be? When K addressed this concern with smaller audiences, he was quick to point out that the lack of congruency between heart and mind contributed to the lack of overall change people had experienced and that it was vital for them to inquire as to how to make their hearts love again. From a more global perspective, K might offer that the public at large or "mass," was either not ready or unable to make change, having been so deeply conditioned to follow others, relinquishing their own power and authority. Change seemed impossible for them. The few capable of change often found themselves caught in resistance, unable to listen with an open mind, trapped in endless thought loops of desire, reward and punishment, personal struggles, and a lack of care and compassion towards others. Most importantly, they appeared to be deeply identified with the "I," the ego. Towards the end of his life, K was asked why he continued speaking. He replied with the following:

" *'That has often been asked: Why do you go on using your energy after fifty years when nobody seems to change? I think when one sees something true and beautiful one wants to tell people about it, out of affection, out of compassion, out of love. And if there are those who are not interested that is all right. Can you ask the flower why it grows, why it has perfume? It is for the same reason that the speaker talks.'*"[4]

Change often comes in the form of a shock or crisis - a turning point in one's life that challenges everything they thought they knew. This could be an existential crisis, the diagnosis of a terminal illness, the death of a loved one or a pet, a divorce, a traumatic accident, family division, war, or a looming financial collapse. These events shake the very foundation of a person's existence. It is during these moments that one is forced to question the meaning of life, recognizing that the reality they once understood is now a painful struggle, filled with confusion and fear. Such moments can be a starting point for change - an awakening to the realization that there must be more to life than what they have known up until that point.

From a Buddhist perspective, we cannot discover the more self-aware, illuminated aspects of our own minds while we continue to dis-own those parts of our consciousness that remain hidden in the shadows. All those parts of ourselves which we commonly term "the shadow" that are denied, repressed, rejected, etc., that live on in us unconsciously - driving thought and behavior - are intimately linked to the negative forces of envy, greed, attachment, rage,

comparison, etc. They must be witnessed and integrated if we are to make peace with them and learn to function more harmoniously within the flow of life. If this integration does not take place, we continue to operate, consciously or unconsciously, from a place of self-hatred, self-loathing, with a gnawing sense that something is terribly wrong with us (Epstein, *Thoughts without a Thinker*, 19).

A year before K's death, during an interview in Washington D.C. in 1985, he made a statement that one could perhaps take as a final warning to humanity. In this statement, he emphasized the urgency for change and reiterated his point that change was the responsibility of everyone and not a select few members of society.

"*If man doesn't radically change, fundamentally bring about a mutation in himself, not through God, not through prayers - all that stuff is too infantile, too immature - we will destroy ourselves. A psychological revolution is possible now, not a thousand years later. We've already lived thousands of years and we're still barbarians. So if we don't change now we'll still be barbarians tomorrow or a thousand tomorrows... If I don't stop war today I'll go to war tomorrow. So the future is now, very simply put*."[5]

One Dharma

We now return to the initial question from ***Part One: Introduction*** posed by author Joseph Goldstein contemplating whether there might be a universal teaching, a "one Dharma," that can serve to unite us in our search for Truth and perhaps, an end to suffering. Goldstein asked:

"What works?

What works to free the mind from suffering?

What works to accomplish the heart of compassion?

What works to awaken us from the dream states of our ignorance?"[6]

From both Buddha and K's perspectives, freeing the mind from suffering lies in our ability to experience ourselves directly – to know ourselves. K was of the opinion that determining the cause of our suffering was difficult since most of us are busy trying to escape from the causes and, if possible, was not particularly helpful since his experience had shown him that at the root of suffering was the loneliness of the "self" which was merely a fabrication of thought. Freeing the mind could be said to be born of the understanding that all suffering is created by a mind devoid of its connection with the heart of compassion which is caught up in ignorance - specifically the ignorance surrounding self-identification with the "I." Additionally, the self maintains fragmentation through the belief that is it separate or different from other people. From the book, *Mind in Buddhist Psychology*, Herbert Guenther sums up the profound power of the mind through the following quote:

"The Buddha himself said,
'Thus, all terror

And also the countless frustrations
Come from the mind.'

When one does not know the mystery of the mind
Which is the most important thing regarding the dhamma,
But wishes to gain happiness and to relinquish pain,
He is hopelessly lost…" [7]

In his book, *Buddhism*, Buddhist scholar and author, Christmas Humphreys also pointed out that the fundamental emphasis for all Buddhists is the self-observation and study of their own mind, their own thoughts. He explained that so-called "good" and "evil" deeds were nothing more than thoughts labeled as either positive or negative and that all manifestations had their root in the mind – in imagination, thought and personal will. In that sense, we are all nothing more than the result of our thoughts.

"*As all is Mind, Mind-Only, all things, all compounds, are Sunya, Void of ultimate content… All things are One and have no, life apart from it; the One is all things and is incomplete without the least of them. Yet the parts are parts within the whole, not merged in it; they are interfused with Reality while retaining the full identity of the part, and the One is no less One for the fact that it is a million-million parts.*"[8]

Accomplishing the heart of compassion and awakening ourselves from the dream states of our ignorance may seem daunting but if we hope to live a life of abundance and peace, a life of meaning and purpose, our biggest obstacle appears to be mastering the right functioning of our mind. According to S. N. Goenka (1924-2013), an Indian teacher of Vipassanā meditation, the true work of any Buddhist was practicing purity of mind; this was the supreme teaching of Buddha. Additionally, K would recommend:

"*One has to put aside these superficial things, these distractions, these self-deluding indulgences, and cultivate right thinking. Right thinking comes through self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is not based on any formula; but through constant awareness of our thoughts and feelings, of actions and reactions, and of all the opposites that lie within us, comes self-knowledge, from which arises right thinking, right understanding. Right thinking demands right occupation, and action that is not exclusive, for self-knowledge is not intellectual knowledge, which is separative, limited, narrow. In understanding oneself, there is the comprehension of the whole.*"[9]

Per K, all thought is the result of the thinker. Apart from the thinker, thought itself cannot exist. Thought is devious, cunning, and it twists everything for its own convenience. The thinker, the observer, the one who acts, is always stationed in the past, imbued with the heritage of the collective unconscious. Ultimately, the past is knowledge, and the thinker is not separate from it. Thought itself is the product of the past; it has created the past, and then divides itself into the thinker and the thought, with the thinker believing they must shape or control the reality that thought has created. But this is a misconception; there is only thought. The self, the "me," is the past. Imagination may project the future, but it too is born of thought. Thus, thought, which emerges from knowledge, has not transformed humanity and will never do so, because knowledge is inherently limited and will always remain so.

Additionally, K says that only when there is a division between thinker and his thought, does fear come into being. When there is no thinker, there is no conflict in thought (Krishnamurti, *The First and Last Freedom*, 231).

"*Suffering, when allowed to mature, finds its own release.*"[10]

K felt that for thought and feeling to live and die fully, they must reach their complete maturity. All that exists within us - our thoughts, feelings, emotions, reactions, ambitions, as well as the aspects we either repress or celebrate like envy, jealousy, hatred, joy, and passion must be allowed to unfold fully, in totality. Only in freedom can anything truly flourish. Suppression, control, and discipline only corrupt and distort. Allowing any perceived "negative" thought or feeling to fully blossom is not easy for the mind is quick to condemn or repress rarely giving the thought or feeling the freedom to reveal itself fully. Only in freedom do our thoughts and feelings display their true nature, all the nuances and the depths of their existence within us. When suppressed, they cannot reveal themselves completely. But once a thought or feeling has fully expressed itself, it ends, leaving behind another truth - perhaps one of emptiness, loneliness, or fear. As each thought or feeling is allowed to unfold in its entirety, without censorship from the mind, the conflict between the observer and the observed dissolves. There is no longer a censor, only pure observation, only seeing, right perception. Freedom exists only in completion, not in repetition, suppression, or obedience to a mental pattern. There is completion only in the organic expression of the entire lifecycle of any thought or feeling from birth through the ultimate death of that particular thought or feeling (Krishnamurti, *Krishnamurti's Notebook*, 188-189). This idea was also shared in *Loving and Leaving the Good Life* authored by a young female companion of K's at the time, Helen Nearing, who quoted K as saying: "*If you love, feel great love. If you feel grief, let it rock you to the bottom… Be immensely great in all you think and feel… Change yourself and you will change the world.*"[11]

Understanding the power and influence of the mind is vital for one to fully comprehend the role of thought in one's daily life. Rather than being at the mercy of the mind's habitual ways of operating resulting from years of conditioning, one could begin to work with the mind in new ways to establish healthier modes of functioning as well as the awakening of intelligence. Only then could one begin to perceive and connect with their extraordinary faculty of intuition leaving the voices of the small "self" behind.

As K shared from his *Early Writings*:

"*The mind is the true ruler, the true helper, the true guide; but the mind is also the destroyer, if misused… the mind, when properly used should be the guiding force for the majority of us. Though we may not be intellectual giants, we have ordinary intelligence, ordinary perception and the power to balance things when you use the mind in this manner, you have a tremendous helper…*

You must apply your mind and your heart to discover this hidden garden, this kingdom of happiness, which lies within each one of us. You must find the key that opens all the gates of Heaven, all the gardens of ecstasy; and that key is your own inner voice, that key is your intuition."[12]

The Awakening of Intelligence

Intelligence has commonly been defined as a mental quality that encompasses how people learn, absorb and make sense of new information, how they adapt to new situations and circumstances and make sense of the world. K held a completely different perspective on intelligence. For K, intelligence related to much more than our mental faculties or our ability to apply logic and/or reason in any given situation. In his various definitions of intelligence throughout his talks and books, he approached the subject from a whole-person perspective assigning equal value to qualities such as empathy, compassion, and love. According to K, the realization of truth was not possible without intelligence. From the 1933 May-June edition of the International Star Bulletin:

"*Intelligence is true tenderness and affection combined with a clear mind. There is no intelligence where there is no clear thought, no affection, no pliability of mind, no understanding of the heart, no fullness of feeling – I mean the fullness of feeling itself, not towards a particular person. To live intelligently is to live wholly all the time, meeting every experience, every thought and emotion, completely; when you are living in that eternal present which alone is understanding.*"[13]

A key point in the awakening of intelligence comes with the realization that no matter what we do, we cannot avoid or escape the inevitability of suffering. If we want to be the change we want to see in the world, we must start with ourselves and start where we are – from a place of honesty, sincere intention, and the willingness to change. According to K, this is all that is needed for anyone to embark on the journey to end suffering in one's life. Once that intention is set, a certain vitality and energy emerge to assist us on our quest for greater self-understanding. Once we fully commit to exploring the suffering in our own personal lives which is a mirror of the suffering that occurs in the collective, our unique path will make itself known to us and it is then our responsibility to persist through the ups and downs of our journey towards greater self-awareness. We may come to find that without experiencing suffering and learning to see its value in our lives, we might never know what it truly means to be happy and content with life as we know it.

"*Question: You have said that we cannot escape sorrow. How can a sorrowful person be happy?*

K: There is a very simple answer. He cannot. But sorrow gives the perfume of life. You cannot attain perfection without tears nor can you attain without a smile. You are all afraid of sorrow. But sorrow gives strength, which will sustain you in your struggle; and sorrow is experience. Invite sorrow to your heart, and do not avoid it, nor put it aside, fearing its ache. How can you be happy without the understanding of sorrow? How can you have sympathy without having had tears in your eyes? How can you make or create joy in the hearts of others, if you have not ecstasy in yourself? You must have all things, and sorrow is as noble as joy. Only by dressing sorrow in black is it made dreadful. Without tasting all experience, as the bee tastes every flower in the garden, you can never attain that eternal happiness which is freedom from the yoke of experience. You want to attain without a struggle. By some miracle you think you will reach the great heights. That is why you have so many creeds, so many religions, so many rites, so many props to uphold you. You are afraid to face yourself and your weakness. Only by understanding that weakness and conquering it, can you attain perfection."[14]

During K's Talks & Dialogues in Saanen in 1968, he highlighted to his audience that one of the greatest problems humanity faces is the problem of sorrow because people have accepted sorrow as a way of life. People have accepted war as a way of life. He was not only speaking of the wars fought on the ground, but the internal wars that are fought within our own being, within ourselves. His concern, naturally, was that humanity seemed to accept this inevitability of internal and external division as a way of life (Krishnamurti, *Talks & Dialogues, Saanen 1968*, 78). However, he was also clear that through meditation, or the careful observation of the workings of our own mind, we could come to understand the totality that suffering has brought to our lives. We could discover its nuances and intricacies, examining it as it moves through our life experiences and questioning the role conditioning has contributed to our experience of suffering as well. In this sense, life itself must become a living meditation where we no longer sit down on a cushion for 10 minutes per day but we become acutely aware of ourselves as we move through the various activities and periods of stillness throughout our days. K shared a simple observation that all psychological suffering begins and ends in and through the mind. The mind, he explained, is its own prison. Therefore, transformation, liberation from suffering can only be achieved by the ending of the ceaseless activity of mind and we can do that through right perception or learning to see.

"*So it is very important to learn to see, to observe. And what is it we are observing? Not the outer phenomenon only, but the inward state of man. Because unless there is a fundamental, radical revolution in the psyche, in the very root of one's being, mere trimming, mere legislation on the periphery, has very little meaning. So what we are concerned with is whether man, as he is, can radically bring about a transformation in himself; not according to a particular theory, a particular philosophy, but by seeing actually what he is. That very perception of what he is, will bring about the radical change. And to see what he is, is of the highest importance - not what he thinks he is, not what he is told that he is.*

We are going to find this out by observing ourselves, because the moment there is a radical change in what we are, we shall bring about peace in the world. We shall live freely - not do what we like, but live happily, joyously. A man who has great joy in his heart has no hatred, no violence, he will not bring about the destruction of another. Freedom means no condemnation whatsoever of what you see in yourself. Most of us condemn, or explain away or justify - we never look without justification or condemnation. Therefore the first thing to do - and probably it's the last thing to do - is to observe without any form of condemnation. This is going to be very difficult, because all our culture, our tradition, is to compare, justify or condemn what we are. We say 'this is right', 'this is wrong', 'this is true', 'this is false', 'this is beautiful', which prevents us from actually observing what we are."[15]

In addition to this right perception, right action is needed to truly awaken the infinite, creative source of intelligence that resides within each and every one of us. K was concerned that students who were not encouraged to follow their passion would eventually become mediocre order-followers if not allowed an opportunity to inquire what in life brought them joy. He felt they must be encouraged to follow their own unique course of inspiration. Self-actualization refers to one fulfilling their true potential, embracing the disorder or confusion within to fuel a lifepath devoted to what one felt called to do this life. He encouraged students to choose a path with intention to create a life that felt inherently meaningful to them personally as opposed to following the standard dictates of their parents and going on to become a doctor,

lawyer, or business person. In choosing to follow their own dreams and aspirations, K was confident these students would live in alignment with their inner values and bring that contribution to light that only they could manifest in this lifetime.

Once one embarks on the journey of inner understanding and growth, one begins to realize that we are all part of a magnificent world and that humanity, and the universe are inherently connected. Each person is a part of the whole, and as one becomes more conscious of this connection, a profound inner peace, beauty, and harmony becomes part of one's life experience. This treasure reveals itself to those who awaken to their true nature, in contrast to the broader human experience, which often lacks the awareness of the importance of self-knowledge and remains indifferent to the wonders and miracles that self-knowledge generously offers us.

Self-realization goes beyond the individuality of the small "self" recognizing the unity with the essence of all existence and is the part of the journey of life when one has actualized their true potential and essence in their life. Through self-actualization, one becomes an instrument of a higher will manifesting personal and universal truths in daily life. Key components of self-actualization are the awareness, love and acceptance of oneself, the pursuit of growth, curiosity and creativity in living according to one's values. Free from external validation, one can embrace challenges as opportunities for transformation through the act of becoming fully oneself.

Self-realization is the profound understanding that resonates throughout every aspect of our being - that everything we seek is already within us. There is no need to search outside ourselves or wait for some distant connection with the divine, for it is already present within us. This "Self" is what K referred to in his *Early Writings* at the start of this project. To revisit his teachings, K emphasized that the purpose of life was to enrich and harmonize the Self through personal experience. He believed that living from experience could foster a deep sense of purpose, which encompasses the struggle to understand life. When one accepts that life includes both struggle and sorrow, a strong sense of purpose enables them to face challenges and obstacles with courage, rather than retreating in fear. At this point, life - despite its ups and downs - can become truly thrilling. This is the richness, the sweetness, and the freedom within each of us that K spoke of.

In another excerpt from K's *Early Writings*, entitled "Establish Your Purpose" written in 1927, Bombay, India, K shared the following:

"*Human beings forget the goal to which their life leads; hence there is always confusion. Because of the lack of foresight of the thing they desire, they are confused and they are lost, and it is for this reason that you must establish for yourself whither you are going, what your purpose is in life. And when once you have established this for yourself - not by the authority of another, not by the authority of sacred books, nor by the authority of individuals but by a clear-cut ideal - and have definitely decided to follow it, you will attain liberation. And if you have been able to establish such an ideal, then that ideal will become part of your own life and you will walk towards that goal, all things becoming easy to you… Thus the purpose of human life is to accumulate experience and from that experience to learn wisdom, and from that wisdom to hear the voice of intuition, which will lead us towards the goal which belongs to*

everyone, irrespective of caste, race or religion, irrespective of forms of worship of any God. So you see, if you have that view, if you have such a purpose in life, then all the restricting ideas of your religious thought, all your narrowness will vanish and you will become like the sun, giving light to all those who seek it. And there lies the beauty of life, which is seen in the bright running waters. We must therefore come out of our stagnation and go into the stream of Liberation."[16]

As Jack Kornfield, author of *A Path with Heart* advised, we must realize the self to transcend the self, or to reach emptiness from a Buddhist perspective. Self-realization is the ongoing process of strengthening our awareness of truth, letting go of doubts, and connecting with the sacred, whole, and unlimited presence within life. The connection between self-realization and self-actualization offers the awareness and inner stability needed to pursue this realization. Inner stability helps build a strong and healthy sense of ego, which serves as a foundation for deeper personal growth. In this sense, our strengths, values, and aspirations allow us to transcend our personal identity and explore higher levels of consciousness. A stable ego does not cling to roles or false personas (i.e., self-images); instead, it fosters a flexible, grounded sense of self that can ultimately transcend itself and unite with what Buddhist scholar, Coomaraswamy, referred to as the "Great Self." With the dissolution of self, we begin to experience a deep silence from within as well as the unity of our interconnected nature. From K's *Early Writings*:

"You are the Absolute,
you are the Path,
you are in every tree in that garden,
in every plant, in every creature…

If you would understand,
you must obey only that voice within each one of you…

But he who would seek that Pool of Wisdom,
that Kingdom of Happiness where Truth abides,
must first learn to destroy self."[17]

The Rich and Harmonious Self

Nearly all of K's teachings emphasize the vital necessity for those seeking change to experience a deep psychological transformation that liberates consciousness from its own conditioning into one that is unconditioned, free of the past. This essential transformation, derived from insight, cannot be achieved through any effort or deliberate actions taken by the self, including any form of meditative practice. Such actions only reinforce the notion of a separate self. Engaging in practice inherently accepts the illusion of time and progress, allowing the conditioned self to persist as it strives for spiritual improvement, greater clarity, or moral growth. When we see ourselves on the battlefield of life, injured and in need of assistance, we must go to the root of the problem, the mind. Christmas Humphreys echoes a similar sentiment in his book, *Buddhism*:

"*Pull out the arrow, said the Perfect One, and do not delay with enquiries as to its length and provenance, nor the name and tribe of the man who shot it. Now is the moment of salvation, of the making an end of suffering… Life is a bridge - build no house upon it; a river - cling not to its banks nor to either of them; a gymnasium - use it to develop the mind on the apparatus of circumstance; a journey - take it, and walk on! The 'passing show' is to be used, and neither enjoyed nor ignored, for behind the show is only mind, Mind-Only.*"[18]

K recommended that a fundamental starting place for our journey is to begin fresh, as if we know nothing: "*Forget all you know about yourself; forget all you have ever thought about yourself; start as if you know nothing*."[19] This approach fosters a sense of innocence and curiosity. If sincere, we might find that we do not have all the answers and become teachable again. However, the "teacher" is not something external to us – it is connecting with that internal force commonly referred to as intuition or perhaps divine will. From this place, we can embark on a journey to realize what meditation is and is not through our own self-observation of the movement of thought and that this could be accomplished through what he called a "passive awareness." Meditation can also show us the extent to which we waste our energy because, according to K, an abundance of energy is needed to bring about a transformation of mind. From K's book, *Freedom from the Known*:

"*Meditation is one of the greatest arts in life – perhaps the greatest, and one cannot possibly learn it from anybody. That is the beauty of it. It has no technique and therefore no authority. When you learn about yourself, watch yourself, watch the way you walk, how you eat, what you say, the gossip, the hate, the jealousy, if you are aware of all that in yourself, without any choice, that is part of meditation. So meditation can take place when you are sitting in a bus or walking in the woods full of light and shadows, or listening to the singing of birds or looking at the face of your wife or child.*"[20]

The fundamental purpose of meditation, explained K, is to observe ourselves. Earlier in this work, K referred to his own meditation as seemingly "purposeless." In not assigning any specific label(s) to his own meditation, this activity could serve to reveal certain depths to the functioning of K's mind as it quietly watched its own activities. K observed that for self-awareness to reveal itself, one would have to maintain both patience and alertness during meditation. He referred to this as purification which would lead one into right thinking which was necessary to free one from suffering (Krishnamurti, *The World Within*, 27). On April 21, 1985, K spoke in Washington D.C. on applying self-observation to personal sorrow:

"*When there is sorrow there is no love. When you are suffering, concerned with your own suffering, how can there be love?... What is sorrow? Is sorrow self-pity? Please investigate. We are not saying it is or it is not... Is sorrow brought about by loneliness – feeling desperately alone, isolated?... Can we look at sorrow as it actually is in us, and remain with it, hold it, and not move away from it? Sorrow is not different from the one who suffers. The person who suffers wants to run away, escape, do all kinds of things. But to look at it as you look at a child, a beautiful child, to hold it, never escape from it – then you will see for yourself, if you really look deeply, that there is an end to sorrow. And when there is an end to sorrow there is passion; not lust, not sensory stimulation, but passion*."[21]

Be a Light unto Yourself

If there was one key message K would leave the world after his many years of teaching, it would be a call to each person to seek their own answers, to look within themselves for truth and guidance. He urged people to embark on a path of self-awakening that was unique to them, one that no one else could walk for them. This message is not unlike the final advice given by the Buddha in his Last Sermon, where he encouraged his disciples to seek salvation only through Truth and to rely solely on that Truth as their guide. Buddha emphasized that they should not look for assistance outside of themselves. This idea presents one of the greatest challenges of human existence: to trust oneself fully for guidance, to rely on inner wisdom rather than external authorities, and to carve out a personal and authentic path without falling victim to comparison, self-judgment, or doubt. Finding one's own path is not an easy task. It may seem overwhelming, especially when we live in a world filled with distractions, expectations, and countless voices telling us who we should be or what we should do. But according to K, the most crucial step is simply the commitment to begin this personal journey. The key to embarking on this path is not in finding quick answers or following someone else's map, but in the willingness to be deeply honest with oneself and to cultivate a sincere intention to understand who we truly are.

In 1920, Krishnamurti published a poem titled "The Path," which vividly described the luminous yet often daunting journey he himself was called to walk. In the poem, he expressed how his spiritual path was uniquely his - designed specifically for him and for him alone. No family, no friends, no companions could share in the exact same path. While the description of the path is, at times, intimidating and filled with hardship, it also highlights the immense courage and unwavering commitment required to walk it. The path is not one of comfort or certainty, but one of deep self-discovery and personal transformation. This notion of a unique, individual path is echoed by Christmas Humphreys, who described the "Path" as an embodiment of the Middle Way. According to Humphreys, this path requires us to *become* the path itself. Rather than simply walking along it or observing it from a distance, we must immerse ourselves fully in the journey. It is only by becoming the journey, by living it with all our being, that we can experience its true benefit. Just as the path is not separate from the traveler, the journey of self-awakening cannot be detached from the process of observing oneself. It requires our full presence, effort, and commitment.

> *"'Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become the Path thyself'; and that the Path is at all times a Middle Way. All that we think and say and do is short of perfection, for it is ever at least a hair's breadth to the one side or the other of the median ideal. Yet to find and then to tread this Middle Way, unswervingly, untiringly, is the oldest, hardest, and most enjoyable game in the world. Whether viewed as a religion, a science or an art, a habit, a hobby, or as the only thing in a dismal world which is 'worth the wear of winning', this ceaseless effort to bestride and ride the Bird of Life is a whole-time job for any man, and its own supreme reward."*[22]

Although K and the Buddha were two distinct figures, living in completely different times and addressing the unique cultural concerns of their respective eras, their teachings share remarkable similarities and complement each other in many profound ways. Both thinkers centered their teachings around the fundamental issue of human suffering. They identified

the root causes of this suffering as ignorance, desire, wrong thinking, and the attachment to the concept of an "I" - an egocentric self that, upon closer examination, reveals itself to be nothing more than an illusion. At the core of both K's and the Buddha's philosophies was the understanding that beneath the surface of conditioned thought and all forms of conditioning, each person has access to a vast reservoir of untapped creative intelligence. Neither K nor the Buddha suggested that only a select few could realize this potential. On the contrary, they taught that every person, regardless of their uniqueness or background, had the capacity to awaken to this deeper wisdom. The key to unlocking this transformative potential lay in the simple willingness to observe the workings of the mind. By cultivating insight into the mind's patterns, people could radically transform themselves. For both K and the Buddha, the possibility of overcoming suffering lies within each of us. They taught that we could understand the causes of our suffering, eliminate them, and ultimately end all forms of suffering by seeing the root causes in their totality - such as desire, ignorance, and various forms of attachment – specifically to our self-identification with the "I." From the 1933 May-June edition of the International Star Bulletin, "Talks in the Oak Grove, Ojai," K shared the following:

"*Through beliefs, through cherished illusions, through self-deceptions, through the sway of false values and the domination of fear, you cannot live intensely in completeness. These exist as long as there is the center of selfishness, which is ego-consciousness. All opinions, conceptions, motives, arise from this center; and only by becoming aware of that center, that is, by becoming aware of your own selfishness in its ugly nakedness, in its cruelty, can you be free of it. In this freedom from self-consciousness alone lies ecstasy, enduring happiness.*"[23]

And from the Buddhist perspective, according to Paul Carus, in *The Gospel of the Buddha*:

"*The attainment of truth is possible only when self is recognized as an illusion. Righteousness can be practised only when we have freed our mind from passions of egotism. Perfect peace can dwell only where all vanity has disappeared.*"[24]

Despite our individual differences, we share essential aspects of the human experience, and within each of us lies the potential to awaken to a higher state of being. The desire to realize our true nature, when pursued with sincere intention, can ignite the divine spark within us. Recognizing that we are all part of the same interconnected human family can make behaviors rooted in competition and comparison seem not only unnecessary but ultimately absurd. We are each on our unique journey, navigating our personal experiences, histories, and the complexities of our inner worlds, trying to make sense of our actions and responses. Those who operate from the limited perspective of the small "self" are often trapped within a hierarchical mindset, constantly comparing themselves to others - either feeling inferior or superior. In contrast, a person who has found an end to suffering no longer feels the need to place themselves above or below others. They recognize that all beings are part of the same interconnected whole, deserving of peace and well-being. An awakened individual sees others not as competitors but as fellow members of the human family, each on their own path to self-understanding and transformation.

Vimala Thakar, a prominent spiritual teacher, embarked on her own search for truth from a

young age. Over the course of her journey, she had the opportunity to attend several of K's talks in India, where she was deeply moved by both his teachings and their personal friendship. The first time she heard him speak, she immediately felt a profound resonance with the wisdom he shared. This moment marked the beginning of a transformative period in her life. The following excerpt from her book *Life as Teacher* captures the essence of an awakened life:

"Life is divinity, there is no divinity apart, outside or independent of life. And divinity is creativity… It seems to me, my friends, that to live is to perceive divinity, to be aware of the creativity of divine life, partaking of that creative energy, receiving it, assimilating it and sharing it with the fellow beings that inhabit the planet… The act of living implies an interaction with that sanctity of life, with that creativity of life."[25]

Notes

[1] Krishnamurti, *Early Writings, Vol. I*, 4.
[2] Luytens, *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti*, 113.
[3] Krishnamurti, *Verbatim Report, Krishnamurti's Talks, Banaras, 1949-1950*, 36.
[4] Luytens, *The Life and Death of Krishnamurti*, 133.
[5] *Ibid.*, 145.
[6] Goldstein, J. (2001, Winter). One Dharma. *Tricycle*, Vol. XI, 68.
[7] Guenther, *Mind in Buddhist Psychology*, 6.
[8] Humphreys, *Buddhism*, 17.
[9] Krishnamurti, *The World Within*, 36.
[10] *Ibid.*, 177.
[11] Nearing, *Loving and Leaving the Good Life*, 50.
[12] Krishnamurti, *Early Writings, Vol. I*, 2-3.
[13] Krishnamurti, J. (1933, May-June). Talks at Adyar, India. *ISB*, Vol. 3, 100.
[14] Krishnamurti, J. (1931, February). Life's Problems, Some Questions & Answers. *ISB*, Vol. 2, 14-15.
[15] Krishnamurti, Beyond Violence, 6-7.
[16] Retrieved from: https://www.etresoi.ch/krishnamurti/early/krishnamurti-02.html
[17] Krishnamurti, *Early Writings, Vol. I*, 5-7.
[18] Humphreys, *Buddhism*, 17-18.
[19] Krishnamurti, *Freedom from the Known*, 20.
[20] *Ibid.*, 115-116.
[21] Retrieved from: https://www.jkrishnamurti.org/content/2nd-public-talk-21st-april-1985
[22] Humphreys, *Studies in the Middle Way*, 83-84.
[23] Krishnamurti, J. (1933, May-June). Talks in the Oak Grove, Ojai. *ISB*, Vol. 3, 104.
[24] Carus, *The Gospel of the Buddha*, 42.
[25] Thakar, *Life as Teacher*, VII-VIII.

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Appendix A: Fundamental Buddhist Beliefs

In his book *Buddhism: A Short History,*[4] Buddhist scholar and author, Edward Conze, provides readers with a wealth of history and wisdom based on his years of study of the older texts sharing his understandings and interpretations using a more contemporary style of language than found in the translations of the Buddhist scriptures. Both he and Christmas Humphreys, another well-known Buddhist author considered to be a pioneer of Buddhism in the West, have shared these fundamental Buddhist beliefs in the books that they have penned. It's likely these beliefs were formulated and scripted at least 500 years after the original teachings of the Buddha were delivered. Those fundamental beliefs include:

1. Love, tolerance, and compassion for all human beings is essential, without discrimination, as is kindness expressed towards all members of the animal kingdom.
2. The Universe was not created by any "God" and functions in accordance with Universal (Cosmic) Law.[5]
3. The essential truths upon which Buddhism is founded are organic; they have been passed down through the ages by other awakened beings, also known as Buddhas, Arhats, etc.
4. Gautama Buddha was the fourth known Buddha born of a royal family approximately 2,500 years ago; his birth name was Siddhartha Gautama.
5. The Buddha taught ignorance and sorrow lead to desire; unfulfilled desire leads to rebirth (which is the cause of sorrow); to overcome sorrow one must avoid rebirth by overcoming desire by eliminating ignorance.
6. One must create a life with the understanding that rebirth is not necessary but the product of ignorance; this present life is not the one and only life there is; humans have been caught in repetitive cycles of birth, decay, death and rebirth for eternity chasing pleasure and avoiding pain.
7. Ignorance may be dissolved through kindness and compassion for all, in developing one's intelligence, thinking thoughts that serve both the individual and the collective, and abandoning the lower sense pleasures which lead to attachment.

[4] pp.71-73; Originally published as *A Short History of Buddhism* in 1980.
[5] Also known as Natural Lore

8. The desire to live eternally is the cause of rebirth; Nirvana is possible through meditation.
9. Ignorance can be dissolved, and suffering can end through the Four Noble Truths.
    a. Misery and suffering are inevitable if one lives in ignorance.
    b. Unrelenting desires that are never permanently fulfilled are the cause of this misery.
    c. Stepping away from habitual desiring for the sake of pleasure or the avoidance of pain results in the end of suffering.
    d. The means by which this is accomplished is the Noble Eightfold Path.
10. Latent in every human is the ability to become an awakened being, a Buddha; meditation can lead to enlightenment.
11. The essence of Buddhism is to stop living from the selfish, "self-serving," materialistic ignorance of the lower self through the cultivation of the "Self-serving" spiritual faculties described in the Noble Eightfold Path.[6]
12. With each new rebirth, the merits and demerits of previous lifetimes are carried into the present lifetime which is commonly known as "Karma." This Karma shapes the trajectory of the present life experiences. The causes and effects of this current lifetime are said to be scripted based on prior life experiences.
13. To attain "good Karma," the following precepts should be followed: Do not kill, steal, indulge in forbidden sexual pleasure, lie, or take intoxicants of any kind which alter one's consciousness.
14. One should not believe anyone, believe what is written in any book, blindly follow any tradition, unless is in accordance with sound logic and reason.

[6] See ***Part Two: The Buddha & Buddhism*** for more information on "self" versus "Self."

Appendix B: The Twelve Principles of Buddhism

The twelve principles of Buddhism appear to be similar in many ways to what are commonly referred to as the twelve Universal Laws (i.e., Universal Lore) dating back to ancient Egypt and found in the philosophical works of Plato and Socrates. These principles are also contained within the Hermetic tradition based on the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus. The likeness of Universal Lore to ancient global philosophical and spiritual traditions is uncanny and it has only been recently that this information has gained popularity within the mainstream.

K would maintain that one need not study any of these spiritual texts as all the information contained within them is already available within oneself in its incorruptible form. Again, we return to the relevance of insight as opposed to the accumulation of knowledge and information. I find it interesting to study the traditions that have come before our time, to read the stories of other spiritual seekers and to follow along on their journey but if K has taught us anything, it's that the answers that we seek are already within us and the desire to look externally for our salvation is a futile endeavor.

The following is a description of the Twelve Principles of Buddhism:[7]

1. Total Commitment: One's inner work and inner journey is of the utmost importance which should begin immediately once one becomes aware of the problem of suffering. This commitment to one's inner work must be continued with daily steadiness. Self-salvation is each person's responsibility. Begin in facing life as it is, facing oneself as one is, learning foremost from direct and personal experience. Imagine having been given the diagnosis of a terminal illness. That same fervor and seriousness must be applied to the spiritual sickness of ignorance in order to transmute the opposing forces within oneself.
2. Impermanence (*Annica*): Everything in life is continually changing and not self-existent. There is nothing to grasp or hold onto on this journey. We all must develop enough awareness and flexibility to move with the changing seasons of our own

[7] Conze, *Buddhism: A Short History,* 71-73.

journey. Everything that lives is subject to ill-health, will eventually age and expire.

3. The Law of Change: Applies to all transitory things and to the Soul as well. There is nothing lasting or immortal other than the ultimate reality or Truth. Only that which is unchanging and everlasting is true. All life on Earth are manifestations of this ultimate Reality. "*No one owns the life which flows in him any more than the electric light bulb owns the current which gives the light.*"[8]
4. The Law of Cause and Effect: The Universe is the expression of cosmic law; all effects have their causes. Our current trajectory in this present lifetime is the sum total of the causes and effects of all previous lifetimes. Through Right Thought and Right Action, one may gradually gain more access to their own Buddha nature, their own indwelling divine essence, through a process of purification by paying close attention to action/reaction (i.e., Karma). Self-realization is the end of the painful process of rebirth.
5. The Law of Divine Oneness: Recognizing the interconnectedness of all life fosters compassion, embodying what is often called the "Law of all Laws" - Eternal Harmony.[9] While the physical body may perish, death itself is an illusion. A great deal of our suffering appears to be the result of our feelings of separateness from others, from ourselves, from nature, and from not realizing that everything in life is inter-connected and ever-changing.
6. The Four Noble Truths: Each soul-embodied human, a fractal of the universe, must come to understand that everything is inter-connected as well as ever-changing. Man's ignorance of this relational aspect of the micro and the macro, the whole living, breathing pulse of life, leads to the striving for personal gain whether it is at the expense of others or to the benefit of the collective. All of this produces suffering and a yearning for a sense of fulfillment that is never attained. The Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths:
    a. Suffering is pervasive throughout life.
    b. Suffering results from ignorant, selfish desire, attachment to the "self."
    c. The cure resides in the removal of the cause.

[8] Conze, *Buddhism: A Short History,* 74.
[9] Conze, *Buddhism: A Short History,* 75.

d. The Noble Eightfold Path which leads to the end of suffering is the cure.

7. The Eightfold Path: Right Views, Right Intentions, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. This path represents a Buddhist guide to living.
8. Liberation is an Inside Job: Reality as well as Truth cannot be described in words. The Buddha, through his total commitment to and persistence on his path, pierced the armor of ignorance, lifted the veil of amnesia, and transcended the limitations of self-hood. All humans and other life forms contain within themselves this potential for enlightenment. "*Look within, thou art Buddha*."
9. The Middle Way: In between the struggles of misery and the clarity of enlightenment lies the Noble Eightfold Path - a journey that encompasses all of humanity and calls for a heartfelt and mindful sincerity.
10. Spiritual Self Mastery: The observation of oneself, specifically one's inner workings: physical sensations, thoughts, attitudes, opinions, speech and actions/reactions, the development of attention, concentration, observation, and impartial witnessing of the self in action can lead to a life of peace, an internal sense of balance and ease, a detachment from the insanity of modern life.
11. Never Follow Anyone: In Buddhism, individual intuition is the sole authority for truth, applicable only to oneself. Prayer to the Buddha or any deity does not alter the natural consequences of one's actions and is not required. It is our birthright to discover and pursue our own spiritual path. In the words of the Buddha: "*Work out your own salvation with diligence*."
12. Buddhism as a Life Philosophy: The definitions of Buddhism are far-reaching as it encompasses the synthesis of science, religion, philosophy, psychology, ethics, and art. It can offer a way of life that embraces love, friendliness and cooperation, tolerance for differing viewpoints, patience during trying times, and a sense of peaceful mind if pursued with attention and vigor. It is not atheist and does not deny the existence of the soul. Rather, it teaches that individuals are the creators of their own lives, their own realities, and the architects of their own destinies.